

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COMMITTEE OF CHIEF CONSERVATORS OF FORESTS
FOR SCREENING ECOTOURISM PROJECTS HELD AT 2.30 PM ON 18.06.2015
IN THE CONFERENCE HALL OF FOREST HEADQUARTERS**

The list of participants is separately attached.

Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (D&PFM) chaired the meeting.

The Chairman informed the meeting that allocation of funds under State Plan Budget Head 4406-01-800-91-Ecotourism would be made based on well defined projects for ensuring that only activities permitted under the guidelines issued for community based participatory ecotourism projects and provisions in the management plan of sanctuaries, national parks and tiger reserves only are carried out. The project mode of implementation would also make the monitoring of progress in a more objective manner.

Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (D) informed that new projects would be allotted funds after meeting the spillover commitments of previous years. Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (E&TW) informed that only Adavi Ecotourism Project in Konni Forest Division and Shedurney Ecotourism Project in Schendurney Forest Division have spillover commitment. Above two projects had been given administrative sanction in 2013-14.

It was also informed to the participants that some nominal allotment have already been made under Ecotourism based on information about ongoing projects. Accordingly the allotment agreed during the present meeting will be the total allotment, however fund now going to be allotted will be balance fund after adjusting the amount already disbursed.

The Committee then took up projects included in the agenda. Divisional Forest Officers, Wildlife Wardens and Circle level Officers made detailed presentation.

1. Kalleli-Kadambupara-Chittar Ecotourism Project:

It was informed by Divisional Forest Officer, Konni that the project was mooted for controlling unregulated traffic along Achenkovil- Konni forest road, which is used by public visiting Achenkovil and pilgrims during Sabarimala season. The travellers along the route generally make stopover at scenic locations and litter the forest floor.

The proposal was to engaging the VSSs operating along the route to regulate the tourism activities going on unofficially and to remove the garbage along the route to minimize the damage to forest environment.

After discussion the Committee took the following decision.

- (1). Activities aiming at regulating traffic and removing the garbage only would be taken up and facilities for developing amenities for tourists will not be taken up taking into account the fact that 30 KM of forest road is an elephant corridor.**
- (2). An amount of Rs.17 lakhs would be allocated for activities like setting up of checking station, ticket counter etc.**
- (3). Revised projects would be submitted by the Chief Executive Officer within a week.**

2. Kattathi-Chelikkal Ecotourism Project:

The programme was presented as trekking programme after taking visitors to Kattathipara tribal hamlets and Kurichi areas by jeep. Jungle camping facility also was proposed.

The Committee observed that taking visitors to interior forest areas like Chelikkallar would not be advisable. It was decided to limit the programme at Kurichi up to which there is existing jeep traffic.

After discussion the Committee decided to allot Rs .5 lakhs for developing minimum facilities through VSS. The revised project would be submitted by Chief Executive Officers within a week.

3. Setting up of additional facilities at Kallar Ecotourism:

Chief Executive Officer of Thiruvananthapuram FDA made detailed presentation of the facilities already set up at Kallar and the proposed facilities to be set up during 2015-16. The Committee observed that facilities necessary for providing safety and security to visitors and basic amenities only need be taken up. The activities amounting to Rs.110.4 lakhs was presented. The Committee observed that the activities like construction of huts, setting up of Ayurvedic Rejuvenation Centre, Adventure spots, s need not be taken up. Documentary film through KFDC would be taken up availing fund from Tourism Department for different locations.

After discussion the Committee cleared the project for a total amount of Rs.45 lakhs and Chief Executive Officer was requested to submit revised list of activities limiting to the allotted amount within a week.

4. Setting up of additional facilities at Mankayam Ecotourism Centre:

Chief Executive Officer, Thiruvananthapuram FDA made detailed presentation of additional facilities to be set up at Mankayam. The activities amounting to Rs.55.45 lakhs were presented. The Committee observed that the activities like adventure spots, procuring of camping equipment's, construction of huts etc. would not be required. Maintenance of the center including uniform to the staff, training of guides etc. has to be met from RPPF. Documentary films through KFDC would be taken up through Tourism Department.

After discussion the Committee decided to allocate an amount of 30 lakhs for setting up of additional facilities at Mankayam Ecotourism Centre. Chief Executive Officer was requested to revise the activities for the allotted amount and forward the same within a week.

5. Setting up of additional facilities at Ponmudi Ecotourism covering Golden Valley Ecotourism:

For setting up of additional facilities, activities covering an amount of Rs.129.75 lakhs was presented. The Committee went through the details. The Committee observed that visitor facilities would be set up at Ponmudi to facilitate day visit only. The facilities for stay like single cottage, double cottage were not necessary. Also it was found that for construction of Inspection Bungalow at Ponmudi, funds of other suitable budget heads would be used. Provision of adventure spots was agreed at Ponmudi as a children park is already existing at Ponmudi. Documentary film through KFDC would be made utilizing funds of Tourism Department.

After discussion the Committee decided to allot Rs.49.00 lakhs for developing additional facilities at Ponmudi Ecotourism Centre. Chief Executive Officer, Thiruvananthapuram FDA was requested to forward the revised list of activities as per the allotted amount within a week.

6. Community based Ecotourism at Silent Valley:

Wildlife Warden, Silent Valley National park made presentation of additional activities to be taken up as part of ecotourism at Silent Valley. Major activities included basic facilities at Karuvara, managed by Karuvara EDC, Keeripara trekking and camping, developing facilities at Bommayampathy and additional facilities like apps based audio visual devices, maintenance of watchtower at Syranthri, road improvement along Syranthri route etc.

It was informed by Wildlife Warden that the facilities will be managed by Karuvara EDC and Watchers EDC.

The Committee considered various aspects of proposed additional facilities and decided to allot an amount of Rs.41.00 lakhs for the proposed activities to be established during 2015-16.

7. Community based Ecotourism at Parambikulam:

Deputy Director, Parambikulam Tiger Reserve made detailed presentation of additional facilities for enhancing visitor experience at Parambikulam. The activities like parking area development at Anapadi, renovation of eco shop at Anapadi etc were presented at an amount of Rs.32.00 lakhs.

The Committee observed that ecotourism had contributed largely towards livelihood improvement of tribals in Parambikulam.

After detailed discussion the Committee decided to allot an amount of Rs.32.00 lakhs for additional ecotourism facilities at Parambikulam as per the activities proposed.

8. Additional facilities for Community based ecotourism at Aralam Wildlife sanctuary:

Conservator of Forests, Palakkad made presentation of the additional facilities to be set up in the Tourism Zone of Aralam wildlife Sanctuary, at a total amount of Rs.30 lakhs.

The Committee observed that a provision of purchase of vehicle could be supported under plan fund. Similarly the renovation of Inspection Bungalow would be taken up under suitable budget head.

After discussion the Committee decided to allot Rs.17 lakhs for developing additional facilities for ecotourism in Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary.

9. Developing Ecotourism facilities in Peechi-Vazhani and Chimmony Wildlife Sanctuaries:-

Conservator of Forests Wildlife, Palakkad presented the details of additional facilities to be developed in Peechi-Vazhani and Chimmony Wildlife sanctuaries. The Committee observed that procurement of boat would be taken up as separate proposal. The Conservator of Forests, Wildlife, Palakkad informed that minimum facilities would be developed for the visitors in the above sanctuaries.

After discussion the Committee decided to allot an amount of Rs.27 lakhs for developing Ecotourism facilities in the Tourism Zone of Peechi-Vazhani and Chmmony Wildlife Sanctuaries.

10. Developing facilities Ecotourism in Wayanad wildlife Sanctuary:-

Conservator of Forests, Wildlife, Palakkad presented the immediate requirements of developmental activities for ecotourism in Muthanga and Tholpetty locations. He proposed a total investment of Rs.45 lakhs. The major activity proposed was wheel base concreting of existing roads in the tourism zone of Muthanga and Tholpetti. It was informed that needy patches in the roads would be taken up. He also informed that about 36 jeeps ply every day in Muthanga alone.

The Committee observed that improvement of roads in the tourism zone of Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary at Muthanga and Tholpetty would be necessary. Similarly the ceramby at Muthanga also need maintenance.

After discussion the Committee decided to allot Rs.45 lakhs to Wayanad Wildlife FDA for carrying out developing and maintenance of infrastructure facilities in connection with ecotourism in Wayand Wildlife Sanctuary.

11. The project for procuring vehicles for controlled visitation along Angamoozhi – Gavi- Vallakadavu route:

Deputy Director, Periyar East has prepared a project for introducing bus service operated jointly by Ranni FDA and Periyar East FDA from Angamoozhy to Vallakadavu via Gavi. 30 KM of the road from Angamoozhy to Anathode is passing through mid elevation evergreen forest of Ranni Division. Remaining 40 KM stretch from Anathode to Vallakadavu passes through core area of Periyar Tiger Reserve.

Public vehicles are allowed in limited way from Angamoozhy to Vallakadavu as one way traffic. 30 vehicles are permitted on public holidays and 10 vehicles on week days.

As per the presentation made by the Filed Director much disturbance is caused to the forests and Wildlife due to even limited number of private vehicles allowed. The subject was discussed in the meeting convened by the Hon'ble Minister for Forests and it was decided to take visitors in FDA-run vehicles. Services of trained guides will be provided in each vehicle.

The proposal is to procure 10 mini buses of 30 seats capacity. The buses will operate from Angamoozhy from 6 AM at regular interval of 30 minutes. The last bus will return to Angamoozhy at 5.45 PM. Developing a parking bay at Angamoozhy is also proposed.

Total project cost comes to Rs.150 lakhs. The Committee discussed the proposal in detail. It was found that regulated movement of visitors in FDA-run vehicles with the assistance of trained guides would be necessary for minimizing the disturbance of vehicular traffic in the interior forests.

After discussion the Committee decided to recommend the project to the Director Ecotourism for availing financial support from Tourism Department.

12. Proposal for replacing old buses used in connection with Siruvani Ecotourism Project:-

Siruvani Ecotourism Project was presented to the Committee by the Chief Executive Officer of Mannarkkad FDA. Ecotourism is operated by Singapara AVSS. Presently the visitors are taken in FDA-run vehicles to the Siruvani dam area from Inchikunnu check post in 12 seater Tata ACE vehicles. The vehicles have become old and are not road worthy. The FDA proposes to replace the two vehicles with two

numbers of 16 seater buses. The total project cost is Rs.24 lakhs including cost of procuring buses, carrying out modifications, developing educative extension material etc.

The Committee discussed the project in detail. It was observed by the Committee that visitation would be strictly limited to Siruvani dam area and the trip to Keralamedu would discontinue.

The Committee decided to recommend the project to Tourism Department for availing financial assistance.

13. Developing minimum infrastructure facilities in ecotourism in Idukki Wildlife Sanctuary and Thattekad Wildlife Sanctuary.

The details of the project were presented by the Wildlife Warden, Idukki and Chief Executive Officer, Idukki Wildlife FDA. It was informed that the first phase of the project was sanctioned from Tourism Department during 2014-15 and the works had been completed. The works in connection with Thattekad Sanctuary included finishing and furnishing of cafeteria, developing of parking area, improvement of butterfly garden, developing facilities for nature education camp etc. Proposed cost of the project was Rs.55 lakhs.

The activities in Idukki Wildlife Sanctuary included developing car shed at Vellapara, development of boat jetty area, setting up of souvenir shop etc. The total cost of the project was Rs.40 lakhs.

It was informed by the Wildlife Warden and the Field Director that the activities proposed were as per the Tourism plan in the approved Management plans of sanctuaries.

After discussion the Committee decided to recommend the project to Tourism Department availing financial assistance.

14. Developing facilities for Kozhipara Ecotourism Project:-

The project was presented by the Conservator of Forests, Wildlife, Palakkad on behalf of Conservator of Forests, Eastern Circle. This waterfall is visited by approximately 50,000 people annually. This is located in the forests of Nilambur North Division at the boundary of Malappuram and Kozhikode Districts. Uncontrolled

visitation has caused dumping of waste and degradation to forest environment. There is no arrangements for safety of visitors.

The proposal is for developing minimum infrastructure like information centre cum picket station, providing safety to the visitors by erecting handrail along the river side etc. at a cost of Rs.32 lakhs. The location will be managed by VSS.

The Committee considered the proposal in detail. It was observed that the local community can be encouraged to regulate visitor flow to the forest locations.

After discussion it was decided to allocate an amount of Rs.32 lakhs for developing minimum basic facilities for Kozhipara Ecotourism.

15. Meenvallam Ecotourism Project:-

It was informed by the APCCF (E&TW) to the Committee that the Tourism Department had already agreed for supporting a project for developing basic facilities for eco-tourism at Meenvallam. Divisional Forest Officer, Palakkad had submitted the project for Rs.232 lakhs. Such a project would not be necessary and instead a revised project for developing basic minimum facilities for visitation limiting to about Rs.50 lakhs would be desirable.

The Committee instructed to the Divisional Forest Officer, Palakkad and the Conservator of Forests Eastern Circle to submit a revised project for developing basic minimum facilities for visitation at Meenvallam and APCCF (E&TW) would forward the project to the Director, Ecotourism for funding.

16. Ecotourism project proposal for Kumarakom.

Deputy Director, Periyar East Division and the Chief Executive Officer of FDA made a presentation on developing facilities for nature awareness and education facilities at Kumarakom. Forest Department is having 14 acres of land at Kumarakom which is visited by thousands of people. The adjoining area of Vembanad Lake which is one of the Ramsar sites is a paradise of birds and is an area of extreme biodiversity.

The major proposal is developing a floating interpretation centre, establishing eco-shop in the premises of forest plot and converting existing building in to an interpretation centre.

It was clarified by the Field Director that the proposal was for procuring double hull boat with platform designed as a class room. The Committee observed that floating interpretation centre should have all statutory certificates.

The Committee requested the Field Director to revise the project including more provision for developing floating interpretation centre. The project cost of Rs. 90 lakhs would be required.

It was decided by the Committee that the revised project of Rs.90 lakhs will be submitted to the Tourism Department for funding.

17. Action plan for Abhayaranyam project at Kaprikad.

Assistant Conservator of Forests, Nature Study Centre, presented an APO for Rs.115 lakhs including spill over commitments Rs.17 lakhs for developing facilities in connection with Abhayaranyam at Kaprikad. It also included provision of Rs. 20 lakhs for engaging Mazdoors.

On an enquiry from the Committee, the Assistant Conservator of Forests informed that presently around 5000 to 6000 people visit the area every month. Presently no entry fee is charged.

The Committee observed that the Abhayaranyam project was started during 2008 with the objective of translocating animal rescue centre at Kodanad and a master plan had been prepared. Funds from local MLA also was utilized for the project. After discussion the Committee decided as follows.

- (1). Minimum facilities for visitors like toilet block, cafeteria etc. works of the each are going on should be completed and entry fee should be collected as early as possible. It was decided therefore that ACF must get the required orders from the competent authority to levy entry fee immediately and report. Unless it is done, any further request for fund will not be entertained in future.**
- (2). Revised action plan based on the original master plan for an amount of Rs.60 lakhs including spill over commitments should be prepared and presented to the Committee for approval.**

It was informed to the Committee by the APCCF (E&TW) that the proposals for the following projects also were received in the E&TW Wing.

1. Developing additional facilities for ecotourism in Meenmutty at Makkiyad in Wayanad North Division.
2. Facilities for ecotourism at Paithalmala and Kanjirakolly in Kannur Division.
3. Developing facilities for ecotourism at Kakkayam in Kozhikode Division.
4. Additional facilities in Vanaparvam at Kakkavayal in Kozhikode Division.
5. Facilities for ecotourism at Kakkad in Kozhikode Division.
6. Setting up of demonstration Centre and Vanasree at Crafts Village at Iringol.
7. Developing additional faculties for ecotourism at Achenkovil.
8. Developing additional facilities for community based ecotourism at Brahmagiri in North Wayanad

Since the concerned Chief Executive Officers/Chairpersons of FDAs were absent, the Committee decided that the projects would be screened by the Committee consisting of the following Members for taking a decision.

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (D&PFM)	-	Chairman
Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (D)	-	Member
Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Admin)	-	Member
Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (E&TW)	-	Member

The Committee also decided that all the sanctioned projects should be implemented observing the following conditions.

1. The activities are to be executed through FDAs concerned.
2. Semi permanent structures utilizing eco-friendly construction materials only will be used.
3. FDAs in Wildlife Divisions also should constitute River Forest Protection Fund for managing fee collected from visitors after remitting statutory remittances to government.

4. **Monthly progress report of financial and physical achievements should be forwarded to HQ.**
5. **When community based ecotourism projects are prepared sufficient provision for developing materials for education and extension should be provided.**
6. **A safety audit should be carried out in all the ecotourism locations.**
7. **A tourism management plan should be developed for territorial divisions also in line with that of management plans of sanctuaries and national parks.**

The meeting was over by 5.30 PM


Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (D&PFM)

**MEETING OF COMMITTEE OF CHIEF CONSERVATORS OF FORESTS
FOR SCREENING ECOTOURISM PROJECTS HELD AT 2.30 PM ON 18-06-2015
IN THE CONFERENCE HALL OF FOREST HEADQUARTERS**

List of Participants

Sl. No.	Name & Designation
1.	Sri. S.C Joshi, IFS, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (D&PFM)
2.	Sri. G. Harikumar, IFS, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) & CWW
3.	Smt. Sobhana KS Rao, IFS, Addl. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife)
4.	Sri. L.K. Varshney, IFS, Addl. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Development)
5.	Sri. Surendra Kumar, IFS, Addl. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Vigilance)
6.	Sri. K.J. Varughese, IFS, Addl. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (E&TW)
7.	Sri. D. K. Verma, IFS, Addl. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (SA & NO)
8.	Sri. K.G. Mohanlal, IFS, Addl. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Administration)
9.	Sri. O.P. Kaler, IFS, Addl. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (BDC)
10.	Sri. Jupidi Prasad, IFS, Addl. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (RS), Kollam
11.	Sri. S. Gopalakrishnan, IFS, Chief Conservator of Forests (WP&R)
12.	Dr. P. Pugazhenthii, IFS, Chief Conservator of Forests, Southern Circle, Kollam
13.	Sri. Pramod G. Krishnan, IFS, Conservator of Forests (WL), Palakkad
14.	Sri. S. Janardhanan, Divisional Forest Officer, Ranni
15.	Sri. T. Pradeep Kumar, IFS, Divisional Forest Officer, Konni
16.	Smt. T. Uma, IFS, Divisional Forest Officer, Tvpm
17.	Sri. B. N. AnjanKumar, IFS, Deputy Director, Parambikulam
18.	Sri. P.R. Suresh, Wildlife Warden, Idukki
19.	Sri. Asokan. A, Assistant Conservator of Forests, Kalady
20.	Sri. Manu Sathyan, Asst. Wildlife Warden, Thattekkad Bird Sanctuary

