

**Minutes of the first meeting of SWAK technical committee held on 24.01.2019 at**

**Additional Chief Secretary's Chamber, Environment Department**

The meeting started at 4.30 pm with Shri P.H.Kurian IAS, Additional Chief Secretary to Government, Environment Department in the Chair.

The following members were present:

1. Dr. Harikumar P. S., Senior Principal Scientist and Head, Water Quality Division, CWRDM
2. Dr. Dinesan V. P., Senior Principal Scientist & Head, Geomatics Division, CWRDM
3. Dr. John C. Mathew, Environment Programme Manager, DoECC

The chairman welcomed the committee members and stressed the need of technical committee as mentioned in Wetlands (Conservation & Management) Rules 2017. Environment Programme Manager, DoECC, Convener of the committee explained the different agenda. After an initial discussion, the committee entered into each agenda item and took the following decisions:

**Agenda No. 1. Formation of State Wetland Authority Kerala (SWAK) and its Technical and Grievance Committees**

Noted

**Agenda No. 2. Finalizing the list of wetlands to be submitted to the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change.**

The committee scrutinized the draft list of all wetlands and the list of wetlands to be notified based on Wetlands (Conservation & Management) Rules 2017 submitted by KSREC after ground truthing as decided in the last SWAK meeting. The committee decided that the list of wetlands to be notified and all the wetlands need to be re-drafted in the format provided by MoEF&CC in the guidelines for the implementation of Wetlands (Conservation & Management) Rules 2017 and the same has to be placed in the next SWAK meeting for approval and onward transmission to MoEF&CC considering the following points.

- Chira has to be excluded from the list as it's a manmade one having bunds in between.
- Some wetlands can be clubbed and put as one entity and renamed.
- All estuaries mentioned in the list rich in Wetland ecosystem / biodiversity has to be included.
- Estuary area has to be defined and reworked and map has to be generated.

The committee also suggested an amendment in the Kerala Panchayath Raj Act 1994 to make SWAK as the custodian of all the notified wetlands where Wetlands (Conservation & Management) Rules 2017 are applicable.

**Agenda No. 3. Clarification on clearance for unauthorized construction of house building within 50 m from wetland boundary.**

- With respect to Wetlands (Conservation & Management) Rules 2017, unauthorized construction of house or other building within 50m from wetland boundary is prohibited. Such proposals should be sent to MoEF&CC as per Wetlands (Conservation & Management) Rules 2017
- Renovation/reconstruction of existing house/building can be allowed with no change in existing plinth area for local inhabitants.
- In certain cases state government can recommend to the National Wetlands Committee, MoEF&CC for clearance.
- Wetlands (Conservation & Management) Rules 2017 applicable panchayaths has to be intimated regarding the prohibitions/restrictions stipulated in the rule.

**Agenda No. 4. Construction of Electrical control room in Thannermukkom Bund**

- Thanneermukkom bund was constructed in 1974 for flood control in Kuttanad region, before the enactment of Wetlands (Conservation & Management) Rules 2010 & 2017. For the smooth functioning of Bund, electrical control room proposed in the link island is essential to operate the transformer and generator for bund shutters.
- Permission can be granted for the Construction of Electrical control room in Thannermukkom Bund. The structure as mentioned in the proposal for operation of transformer and generator for bund shutters with same plinth area has to be strictly followed. Other structures of permanent nature except the electrical control room are strictly prohibited.

**Agenda No.5. Renovation works done by Kerala Tourist Development Corporation at Kumarakom**

- DPR of the same has to be obtained.
- Permanent structures not allowed.
- Renovation work can be conducted for the old building with no change in plinth area.
- Swimming pool renovation can be allowed as it can be removed at any time.



**Agenda No. 6. Implementation of Management Action Plans of Ramsar Sites of Kerala**

- Sanction for the recruitment of staff exclusively for the implementation of MAPs is still pending with the Government - File No. A1/150/18/Env. has to be submitted to Additional Chief Secretary to Government, Environment Department

**Agenda No.7. Sending a Circular to Local Self-Governments around the 3 Ramsar sites about the restricted activities in the wetlands as per the Wetlands (Conservation & Management) Rules 2017 and directing them to implement the same**

- Member Secretary, SWAK can submit the file to the Chairman, SWAK through Additional Chief Secretary to Government, Environment Department

**Agenda No.8. Inputs/Comments to Draft guidelines for implementation of Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017.**

- Quick inputs/comments already communicated were noted.
- Suggestion: In the new CRZ Notification 2019, 20m is the restriction zone for back water island, the same distance has to be considered for the back water islands where wetland rules are applicable. A request in this regard may be communicated to MoEF&CC to include in the guidelines for implementation of Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules 2017.


**Agenda No. 9. Request for Permission to construct house boat terminal by Tourism Department.**

- As boat jetties are allowed as per the Wetlands (Conservation & Management) Rules 2017, permission may be granted for construction of house boat terminals or other boat jetties.
- Except boat jetty, any other building having permanent nature in that premises is not allowed.
- Facilities of waste management may be stipulated as part of the boat terminal

**Agenda No.10. Proposal for Removal of Waste from VembanadLake and ensure sustainability by Clean Kerala Company Limited.**

- Many component activities are the thrust areas of other line departments, so SWAK does not fund that activities
- In the proposal, removal of waste from VembanadLake is not mentioned as an activity in any of the components, so the proposal has to be resubmitted after discussing with SWAK officials and after that it may be considered for funding as part of the implementation of the MAP of the Vembanad-Kol Ramsar site.

The meeting concluded at 6:15pm

  
29.1.2019  
(EPM)



Chairman

**P.H. KURIAN**  
Additional Chief Secretary  
Revenue & Disaster Management  
& Environment Department  
Government of Kerala  
Secretariat, Thiruvananthapuram.