

**Application for obtaining information under the Right to Information Act, 2005**

To,

The Public Information Officer

Environment Section, Agni Wing

Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change

Indira Paryavaran Bhavan, Jorbagh Road, New Delhi - 110003

Sir/Madam,

I am sending herewith an application seeking information under the Right to Information Act, 2005 as per particulars furnished below:

Name	Shashikala Iyer
Postal address	Environment Support Group, 1572, 36 <sup>th</sup> Cross, 100 Feet Ring Road, Banashankari 2 <sup>nd</sup> stage, Bangalore, Karnataka - 560070
Subject of Information	Regarding Draft Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules 2016
Period to which the information relates	April 2013 – April 2016
Whether information is required by post or in person	By Post (Speed post)
Application fee	Rs.10/-
Mode of payment	Indian Postal Order No. 36F 414138
Whether the applicant is below poverty line	No

**Date:** 20.4.2016

**Place:** Bangalore

  
**Signature of Applicant**

## PARTICULARS OF INFORMATION REQUIRED

### Description of information required:

1. Please provide hard copies of all newspaper advertisements announcing the Notification of the Draft Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules 2016.
2. Kindly provide hard copies of minutes of meetings held by Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change relating to the preparation and drafting of the Draft Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules 2016.
3. Please provide legal translations of the Draft Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules 2016 in all regional language?

Date: 20.4.2016

Place: Bangalore

*Shashi*

Signature of Applicant

अधपत्रा COUNTERFOIL

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File No. J-22012/43/2006-CS (W), PT-I  
Government of India  
Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change  
Paryavaran Bhawan (1st Floor)  
C.G.O. Complex, Lodhi Road  
New Delhi- 110 510

Dated: 30.05.2016

To

Ms. Shashikala Iyer  
Environment Support Group, 1572,  
36<sup>th</sup> Cross, 100 Feet Ring Road,  
Banashankari 2<sup>nd</sup> stage, Bangalore,  
Karnataka-560070

**Sub:** Your application dated 20.04.2016 under the RTI Act, 2005 - in respect of conservation of wetlands- regarding.

Sir,

This refers to your application dated 20.04.2016 under RTI Act, 2005 (Received by this CPIO on 03.05.2016) having internal reference no. MOENF/R/2016/642.

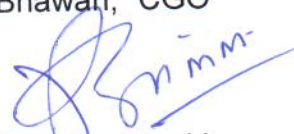
2. The para-wise reply is as under:

Part (1): The draft Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2016 have not been advertised in the news papers. However, these have been uploaded on the Ministry's website [www.envfor.nic.in](http://www.envfor.nic.in), NRCD's website <http://nrcd.nic.in> and displayed on Notice Board and also sent to the State Governments / UTs, etc for inviting objections /suggestions within 60 days i. e. upto 06.06.2016. (Copies enclosed).

Part (2): Copy of the minutes is attached.

Part (3): Draft Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2016 have been translated through the Ministry of Law and Justice Government of India only in two languages i.e. English and Hindi. Bilingual copy of these rules are available on above mentioned websites of the Ministry and NRCD.

2. In case, you are not satisfied with the above response, you may please file an appeal before Shri R.N.Jindal, First Appellate Authority & Director (S), NRCD, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Paryavaran Bhawan, CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, N Delhi-110003.

  
(Chandan Singh)  
Scientist 'C' & CPIO

Copy to:

RTI Cell, MoEF&CC, New Delhi w.r.t. Registration No. MOENF/R/2016/642-for information please.

F. No. J-22012/78/2003-CS (W) - Pt.V  
Government of India  
Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change  
National River Conservation Directorate

Paryavaran Bhavan (First Floor)  
CGO Complex, Lodhi Road  
New Delhi -110510

Dated: 13<sup>th</sup> April, 2016

Subject: Draft Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2016 for public information and seeking objection/suggestions, if any -regarding.

Sir,

Kindly find enclosed a copy of draft Notification on Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2016 published in the Gazette of India vide G.S.R. No. 385 (E), dated 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2016 for public information and seeking objection/suggestions, if any. This notification is also available on the website of the Ministry ([www.moef.nic.in](http://www.moef.nic.in)) and this Directorate (<http://nrzd.nic.in>).

2. The objection/suggestions, if any on the draft Notification may kindly be provided by 06.06.2016 to this Directorate.

*Issued by Speed Post  
19-4-2016*

*o/c*

*R.N. Jindal*

(R.N. Jindal)  
Director (S)

Telfax-011-24366017

Email: [rnjindal@yahoo.com](mailto:rnjindal@yahoo.com)

Encl: as above

- ↓
1. The Chief Secretaries of all State Govts /UTs
  2. Executive Directors of all State Wetland Authorities
  3. Chairman's of all State Pollution Control Boards / Pollution Control Committees

Copy to:


1. All Regional Offices of the MoEF&CC

Government of India  
Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change  
National River Conservation Directorate

Subject: Notification on the draft Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2016 for public information, objection / suggestions – regarding.

A notification on draft Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2016 has been published in the Gazette of India vide G.S.R. No. 385 (E), dated 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2016 and available on the website of Government Press ([www.egazette.nic.in](http://www.egazette.nic.in)).

It may be uploaded on the website of the Ministry for next 60 days (till 06.06.2016) for public information and seeking objection/suggestions, if any.

  
07.04.2016  
(R.N. Jindal)

Director (S)  
07.04.2016

Telfax-011-24366017

email: [rjindal@yahoo.com](mailto:rjindal@yahoo.com)

*Kamta*  
*7/04/16*  
Shri Anna Durai, Consultant (IT), MoEF&CC, IPB, Jor Bagh Road, New Delhi-110003

*OK*

कृपया राजपत्र में प्रकाशित अधिसूचना संख्या सा0का0नि0 385(अ) को  
दिनांक 06 जून, 2016 से पहले नोटिस बोर्ड से न हटाया जाए।

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE THE GAZETTE  
NOTIFICATION No.G.S.R 385 (E) TILL 06.06.2016

संविदा सं. जी.ए.ए. 11004/99

REGD. NO. 11-11004/99

  
**भारत का राजपत्र**  
**The Gazette of India**

असाधारण  
EXTRAORDINARY  
भाग II—खण्ड 3—खण्ड (1)  
PART II—Section 3—Sub-section (1)  
प्रधिकार से प्रकाशित  
PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY

सं. 235/ नई दिल्ली, बुधवार, अप्रैल 1, 2016/चैत्र 12, 1938  
No. 235/ NEW DELHI, FRIDAY, APRIL 1, 2016/CHAITRA 12, 1938

पर्यावरण, जल और जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय

अधिसूचना

नई दिल्ली, 31 मार्च, 2016

सा.का.नि. 385(अ)—केंद्रीय सरकार ने, देश में आर्द्रभूमि के भीतर विभिन्न क्रियाकलापों को विनियमित करने के लिए आर्द्रभूमि (संरक्षण और प्रबंधन) नियम, 2010, अधिसूचना संख्यांक सा.का.नि. 951(अ), तारीख 4 दिसंबर, 2010 द्वारा प्रकाशित किए थे;

और, केंद्रीय सरकार का यह मानना है कि देश में आर्द्रभूमि के प्रभावी संरक्षण और प्रबंध के लिए आर्द्रभूमि (संरक्षण और प्रबंधन) नियम, 2010 को अद्यतन करना आवश्यक है;

और, आर्द्रभूमि, जो जलीय चक्र का अत्यावश्यक भाग है, जल प्रदाय और चिर्मलीकरण; अपशिष्ट स्वायीकरण; बाढ़, अनावृष्टि, सूफान, चक्रवात जैसी उभय प्रतिरोधन संबंधी प्रचंड घटनाओं, सूखे, जल भरण, अपरदन नियंत्रण, सूक्ष्म जलवायु विनियमन और भूदृश्य सौन्दर्योत्थक वृद्धि जैसी अपनी व्यापक पारिस्थितिकीय योग्यता और सेवाओं के कारण समाज की जीवन रेखा है और आर्द्रभूमि महत्वपूर्ण मनोरंजनात्मक, सामाजिक और सांस्कृतिक क्रियाकलापों का भी अडार है तथा ये हमारी समृद्धिशाली सांस्कृतिक विरासत का एक भाग है और ये पारिस्थितिकीय तंत्र बनस्पतीय और प्राणीजात विविधता, जिसके अंतर्गत अनेक दुर्लभ खतरनाक और स्थानिक प्रजातियां भी हैं, का आश्रय स्थल हैं तथा आर्द्रभूमि, अपनी कार्बन अपवाहिका के रूप में कार्य करने, जल व्यवस्था का विनियमित करने, भू-क्षरण को रोकने और दबावयुक्त जैव विविधता को प्राकृतिक वास उपलब्ध करने की सामर्थता के माध्यम से जलवायु परिवर्तन को कम करने और उसे अनुकूल बनाने में सहायक हो सकती है;

और, अधिकतर आर्द्रभूमि, अपवहन और भरणस्थान, प्रदूषण (घरेलू और औद्योगिक बहिष्काय का निष्कारण, ठोस अपविलों का व्ययन), जल विज्ञान संबंधी परिवर्तन (जल अपनयन और अंतर्वाह परिवर्तन) के माध्यम से भूमि सुधार और अवक्रमण के कारण गंभीर रूप में संकटस्थ स्थिति में हैं और उनकी प्राकृतिक संपदा के अत्यधिक उपयोग के परिणामस्वरूप आर्द्रभूमि में की जैव विविधता की हानि और उसके द्वारा उपलब्ध सामग्री और सेवाओं का विदारण हुआ है;

1610 GI/2016

(1)

**Minutes of the Consultation Meeting held on August 8, 2014 at India International Center, New Delhi**

**“Conservation and Sustainable Management of Wetland Ecosystem Services and Biodiversity”**

The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has initiated formulation of a Full Size Project (FSP) on conservation and sustainable management of wetlands for funding support under Biodiversity Focal Area of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The project aims to complement the National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems (NPCA) through interventions related to knowledgebase development, capacity building and piloting integrated management. United Nations Environment Agency (UNEP) has been identified by the Ministry as the GEF Agency, and Wetlands International South Asia as the lead technical partner. A Project Preparation Grant for project formulation was approved by GEF Secretariat. A consultation meeting with state government representatives, national agencies, and experts was held on August 8, 2014 to discuss the various elements of the project framework, partnerships, pilot sites and co-financing opportunities. Draft guidelines for the NPCA and proposed revisions of the regulatory framework for wetlands, which form the basis of baseline project were also introduced and discussed.

The consultation meeting was attended by 34 participants including representatives from 8 state governments, international and national agencies and invited experts (List of participants is annexed). Mr. Shashi Shekhar (Additional Secretary, MoEF&CC) chaired the meeting. The first half was focused on discussions on the proposed GEF project framework, whereas the draft guidelines for NPCA were discussed in the second half. Wetlands International South Asia organized the meeting in consultation with the MoEF&CC under the aegis of the PPG.

**Session I: India Wetlands GEF Project**

Mr. Brijesh Sikka (Advisor, National River Conservation Directorate, MoEF&CC) introduced the purpose and objectives of the consultation meeting. He informed the participants of the genesis of the project, and also introduced the 'incremental funding' principle used for GEF project design.

Dr. Ritesh Kumar (Conservation Programme Manager, Wetlands International South Asia) made a presentation on the GEF project framework. The results framework for each of the project components, namely ES knowledgebase, capacity building and piloting integrated management were presented. Following comments were received on the project framework:

- a) Project design should include a component on 'wetland governance'. Activities should focus on strengthening institutional arrangements for wetland management at state level. Three three pilot sites should serve as demonstration models for developing cross sectoral and participatory institutional coordination mechanism for integrated management of wetland ecosystems.
- b) Integrating wetlands in water resources management should be emphasized as one of the core strategies of the project.

- c) To demonstrate implementation of wise use strategies, 'production values' of wetland ecosystems, particularly related with fisheries and agriculture must be included in various activities related to knowledgebase development, capacity building and pilot sites.
- d) Development of a model policy document for wetlands at national level should be included as a project activity.
- e) While the project component in pilot sites is focused on the individual states, activities related to knowledgebase development and capacity building should operate at national level, benefitting a large network of wetland managers.
- f) The mandates of the proposed four nodes for regional capacity building on wetlands should be confirmed alongwith their willingness for the proposed role.
- g) Capacity building component should build upon the previous proposals to establish a network of institutions rather than a limited number of nodes. The project should also endeavour to build an electronic interface of data on various aspects of wetlands to enable decision making. Interventions for building capacity of wetland user groups in select intervention sites should also be included.
- h) Previous efforts for developing a management effectiveness tool for Protected Areas should be reviewed and suitably modified for application in Indian context. Project implementation should include systematic application of management effectiveness tool in all Ramsar Sites, with an aim of improving their management effectiveness.
- i) Activities eligible for co-financing should be further clarified.
- j) The following proposals were received from the state governments for inclusion as a demonstration site within the project:
  - a. Gujarat – Chari Dhand, Pariyej, Budwana
  - b. Maharashtra – Lonar Lake, Jayakwadi
  - c. Rajasthan – Wetland complex associated with Keoladeo National Park
  - d. Punjab – Harike Lake

In addition to the above, proposals for inclusion of Kanwar Jheel (Bihar), Point Calimere (Tamil Nadu) and Deepor Beel (Assam) were also received from experts and agency representatives.

- k) The World Bank, IUCN, BoBP-IGO, IIT- Roorkee, and Indraprastha University expressed willingness to participate in various project activities related to knowledgebase development and capacity building.



## Session II: Discussion on the National Baseline Project – The National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems (NPCA)

Mr. ShashiShekhar (Additional Secretary, MoEF&CC) made the opening remarks for the session. Emphasizing that wetlands are the lifelines of the society, Mr. Shekhar highlighted the need to bring in a paradigm shift in the design of national level programme for wetland conservation by integrating the following elements:

- Ownership and stewardship of the state governments for management of wetland resources, with the central government playing a facilitating role.
- Creating effective institutional structures at the state level to ensure cross sectoral decision making for wetlands.
- Mainstreaming wetlands in state level policy and decision making by building convergence with ongoing developmental sector investments
- Using diagnostic approaches based on ecological as well social aspects for developing wetland management plans through stakeholder participation and with expert consultation
- Integrating wetlands in water resources management to ensure that land and water use decisions within catchments and coastal zones do not adversely impact wetlands, and are able to use wetland ecosystem services synergistically

Mr. Shekhar concluded his remarks by stating that NPCA will fund only core elements of management plans, with the majority of resources being leveraged from ongoing schemes of central and state governments, as well as that of private sector.

The overview remarks were followed by a presentation on the NPCA guidelines by Mr. BrijeshSikka (Advisor, NRCD, MoEF&CC). He informed that the guidelines address the major management challenges pertaining to lakes and wetlands, including sectoral approaches, adhoc design and implementation of management plans, ineffective governance mechanism, insufficient capacity and limited research-management interface. He laid out the objectives, strategy, eligible activities, implementation arrangements, site selection criteria and application guidelines for NPCA.

Mr. Sikka also informed that the MoEF&CC was considering revisions to the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2010 owing to limited implementation achieved so far, and requests received from State Governments to align regulation with the principle of wetland wise use. He said that in line with the NPCA guidelines, the role of the central government would be to set the boundary condition of maintaining wise use of the wetland, and ensuring that the area is not converted for alternate non-wetland uses. The State Government will be expected to ensure that the wetland is delineated, a nodal authority set up for integrated management, conditions for wise use and activities to be regulated specified and regulation enforced through appropriate agencies and mechanism. Mr. Sikka informed that such changes will allow consideration of the unique character of each of the site, and specification of wise use conditions based on local conditions and ecosystem characteristics.

Following the presentations, comments were invited from the State Government representatives and experts. There was a general appreciation of the strategy, structure and implementation framework as proposed in the guidelines. State

government representatives from Odisha, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Punjab and Haryana informed of the specific measures taken for improving wetland management within their jurisdictions as well as challenges faced. Dr. Ajit Pattnaik (Chilika Development Authority, Odisha) presented an account of how the models of convergence financing and institutional building had helped restoration of Chilika, and upscaling wetland management at the state level.

A summary of comments made on the draft guidelines and proposed revisions to regulatory framework is as follows:

#### **Comments on guidelines**

- a) Criteria for identification of wetlands located in urban and peri-urban areas should include biodiversity considerations, alongwith pollution and other developmental threats.
- b) State government representation should be considered in National Committee on Aquatic Ecosystems (NCAE). Mr. Shashi Shekhar proposed that this be considered on a rotational basis and linked to commitments made by the state governments for conservation and wise use of aquatic ecosystems.
- c) The process for finalization of guidelines should include a broader stakeholder consultation. The members were informed that the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD) and Fisheries Department have made substantial allocations for schemes related to fisheries in wetland ecosystems.
- d) Ministry could provide a suggestive list of expert agencies that can be contacted for development of integrated management plans.
- e) Information on spatial extent of individual wetlands should be placed in public domain. Shapefiles for individual site will help state governments locate the wetlands and plan management accordingly.
- f) Wetlands being self-destructive environment go through a gradual phase of state change. Management aims to prevent occurrence of ecosystem transition thresholds to ensure sustained provision of ecosystem service benefits and maintenance of biodiversity values. Formulation of management strategies for desired state of wetlands should include consideration of specific thresholds.
- g) Rice paddies may be excluded for the generic listing of aquatic ecosystems.
- h) Guidelines for management planning prepared under National Tiger Conservation Authority may be reviewed and section incorporated as appropriate.
- i) Policy guidelines for aquatic ecosystems not covered under the NPCA scheme and wetlands rules should also be spelt out.

- j) Payment for Ecosystem Services and other incentive based mechanisms for promoting conservation and wise use of aquatic ecosystems may be incorporated within the generic list of activities proposed for site management.
- k) Systems for monitoring health of aquatic ecosystems may be outlined, and mechanism for periodic assessment specified.
- l) Site level institutional arrangements should be proposed for the benefit of the state governments.
- m) Detailed guidance on formulation of research initiatives to support site management should be included.
- n) Usage of term 'aquatic ecosystem' should be harmonized across the document, with a clear definition included in the introductory sections.

#### **Comments on regulatory framework for wetlands**

- a) Ramsar Sites should be accorded a specific category in the regulatory framework, as the central government is committed to ensuring their wise use, and thereby has a specific responsibility.
- b) Ambiguity on regulatory framework for coastal wetlands needs to be addressed. The existing rules state that Coastal Regulation Zone Notification would be applicable for regulating coastal wetlands. However, the CRZ notification does not adequately address the conservation needs of wetlands placed in CRZ-II areas.
- c) Provisions for phasing out of practices related to discharge of industrial effluents should be considered, in lieu of providing a six months' timeframe.
- d) Role of central government regulation vis-à-vis state level legislation should be clarified.

At close, it was agreed that all participants will submit their comments on the draft guidelines in writing to the Ministry within a week's time, which will be incorporated as appropriate. Recommendations for GEF project design are to be integrated in the project document. Wetlands International South Asia was asked to review the proposals for pilot sites, and coordinate with the Ministry and respective state government for final proposal.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to Chairperson.

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