

Executive Summary

Peripheries of the protected area network are often vital ecological corridors links and must be protected to prevent isolation of fragments of biodiversity which will not survive in the long run. Therefore, all identified areas around Protected Areas and wildlife corridors have been declared as ecologically fragile under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. In case of places with sensitive corridors, connectivity and ecologically important patches, crucial for landscape linkage, even area beyond 10 km width can also be included in the eco-sensitive zone. The basic aim is to regulate certain activities around National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries so as to minimize the negative impacts of such activities on the fragile ecosystem encompassing the protected areas. Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESAs) have been identified and notified by the Indian Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF) since 1989. Notifications declaring areas as ESAs are issued under the Environment (Protection) Act 1986. The clauses of the EPA which allow for the notification of ESAs hold the possibility of realizing landscape-level conservation.

Eco-sensitive zone around Chandoli National Park is yet to be declared and formalised. In such case where ESZ hasn't been declared, an area of 10 km in width is to be considered as ESZ until it is declared and approved by the MoEFCC .

The Dalmia Bharat Sugar and Industries Limited, Distillery Unit-Ninaidevi, KokurdKokrud is proposing 150 KLPD Molasses/Cane juice/Grain based Distillery along with 2 MW Incidental power generation, Expansion of Sugar Mill (3500 TCD to 6000 TCD) & Co-Generation Power Plant (4.5 MW to 7.5 MW) within the Existing Plant Premises at Village Arala Proposed Private Area-14.29 ha. and -Karanguli,- Proposed Private Area-13.71 ha.Total-31.04 ha. Tahsil Shirala, District Sangli (Maharashtra). Raw material for the sugar industry will be sugarcane. Sugar industry will be operated for season, depending upon availability of sugar cane. Molasses, a by-product of sugar production process will be used as raw material for proposed 150 KLPD Molasses based distillery. Distillery will be operational throughout the year.

The current context is that the aforesaid project location falls in in the deemed 10 Km Eco-sensitive Zone around the periphery of the Chandoli National Park. In order to seek an approval as per the prevailing laws and regulations in vogue, the Competent Authority in the Government of Maharashtra has made it mandatory for the project proponent to prepare and submit a Wildlife Conservation Plan (WCP) for its consideration for approval. Preparation of such a WCP is also a prerequisite laid out in partial fulfillment of proposal for Environmental Clearance of the Project which is under consideration of the Competent Authority in the MOEF & CC, Government of India. Thus, the need of the current WCP.

Wildlife conservation amounts to dealing with various social, economic, political and legal issues related to wildlife conservation and management. It also involves assessment of status and evaluation of impacts of humans and other developmental activities on wildlife habitats and

planning for various mitigation measures thereof. It involves pondering upon and studying the basic ecology and science of wildlife conservation and management. Eventually, the aforesaid issues may be dealt with or addressed through application of science and management principles to solve issues and problems related to wildlife conservation. Applications of modern tools and technology is a watchword nowadays, in dealing with various wildlife management and conservation issues.

Wildlife conservation may be achieved through institutionalised planning processes and or through specialised 'Wildlife Conservation Plans' to address specific issues in the light of some specialised needs in response to certain activities which are likely to have some adverse influence on the wildlife habitats in a particular area. In India, forest and wildlife management goes hand in hand and they are almost inseparable. It is only that the intensity and focus on wildlife management may differ depending upon the legal and management status of the forest areas concerned. Some of the institutionalised planning instruments for wildlife conservation in India are mainly the Working Plans of the Managed Forest Divisions (Territorial Forest Divisions), Management Plans for the protected areas namely National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries, the Tiger Conservation Plans for the Tiger Reserves, Conservation Plans for the Conservation Reserves and Zonal Master Plans for the Eco-sensitive Zones of the protected areas.

Specialised Wildlife Conservation Plans on specific recommendations of the Wildlife Regulatory Authorities of the State Government or the Government of India, may usually be prepared for specialised needs like i. in partial fulfilment and in compliance of the Environment Impact Assessment studies for Environmental Clearance of developmental projects, especially if the area falls in Eco-sensitive Zones of the protected areas (as in the case of the DBSIL Project Site), ii. if the proposed project area falls in a reserved forest area which may also be a part of the protected area or iii. specialised cases if an area in question, proposed for a developmental activity, falls in or occupies a wildlife corridor or dispersal routes/ areas of long ranging flagship species and iv. addressing specialised issues entailing specialised needs related to wildlife conservation in human dominated landscapes with multiple land-use matrices. Wildlife Conservation or Mitigation Plans may also be recommended to be prepared by project proponents of the developmental projects in areas with considerable frequency or occurrence of Human Wildlife Conflict. In such cases Wildlife Conservation Plans or Wildlife Mitigation Plans are considered mandatory, if any of the developmental project concerned are to be considered for approval by the Competent Authorities of the State Government or the Government of India.

The WCP Area (WCPA) has been defined in terms of an 'Extensive Wildlife Conservation Plan Area (EWCPA)' which is the area which falls within a radius of 10 kms., around the DBSIL Project Site and the 'Intensive Wildlife Conservation Plan Area (IWCPA) is the area which falls within the boundary of the Chandoli N.P. and the boundary of the deemed ESZ. The IWCPA falls within the EWCPA.

Objectives of the Wildlife Conservation Plan as follows-

1. To ensure long term conservation of wildlife, especially the Schedule I fauna, if any, in the area of the Wildlife Conservation Plan and thereby in the ESZ.
2. To suggest measures, mechanisms and prescriptions to keep as low as possible the adverse influence of the developmental activity concerned, on the wildlife habitats.
3. To promote amicable coexistence of wildlife and humans in the human dominated landscapes and multiple land-use matrices in the WCP area.

The **Chapter1** – Introduction, elaborates upon the Eco-sensitive Zones of protected areas, their significance, the need for the Wildlife Conservation Plan and the details pertaining to the DBSIL Project site. The **Chapter 2** focuses upon the current context of the project and details pertaining to various facets of the Wildlife Conservation Plan. In continuation the **Chapter-3** elaborates upon the Wildlife Conservation Plan Area – the Study Area- for the purpose of the WCP. The **Chapter 4** describes the methodology for the project which consists of 4 steps as follows-

Step-1: The analysis of the ‘Existing Status and Scenario’ or the ‘as is’ status of Wildlife Conservation in the area, which involves the analysis of the current situation of various wildlife conservation issues.

Step- 2: The ‘should / may be’ scenario proposed pertaining to conservation of wildlife management in the Wildlife Conservation Plan Area (WCPA), in the light of the expansion of the Dalmia Bharat Sugar and Industries Limited, Unit-Ninaidevi, Kokrud, being situated in the ESZ of Chandoli N.P.

Step-3: It consists of the WCP Implementation Costs and Outlay.

Step- 4: The WCP concludes with certain recommendations and proposes a ‘Way Forward’ for long-term Conservation of the WCPA.

The **Chapter- 5** elaborates upon the Existing scenario of the WCP Area. The Wildlife Conservation Plan has two facets as far as the extent of the WCP Area is concerned. The area falling within 10 km radius around the DBSIL Site is the ‘Extensive WCP Area (EWCPA)’ and the area falling between the outer boundary of the Chandoli National Park and the boundary of the deemed Eco-sensitive Zone within the EWCPA is the ‘Intensive WCP Area (IWCPA)’. The existing scenario/ status of the WCPA has been assessed with reference to 7 Components namely- Component 1 - Spatial Database Generation and Analysis, Component 2 - Human Wildlife Conflict, Component 3 – Regulatory Settings, Component 4 – Planning and Management Processes in vogue, Component 5 – Cross Sectoral Programs and Plans, Component 6 – Conservation of Multiple Landuse Matrices and Component-7 – Catchment Area Based Habitat Management. The **Chapter- 6** delves upon the ‘Management Prescriptions’ under three main headings-1. Land-use wise Management Prescriptions 2. Theme-Based Management Prescriptions and 3. Enhancement of Wildlife Conduciveness of the Working Plan Prescriptions

or (Management of Wildlife in Managed Forests (Territorial Forest Divisions). The **Chapter 7** - Proposed Strategy and Action is one of the critical chapters of the WCP and is expected to govern the implementation process of the WCP. The **Chapter 8** elaborates the Monitoring and Evaluation Protocol for the WCP. The **Chapter 9** specifies and proposes the mitigation measures which are to be complied with by the DBSIL. The **Chapter 10** concludes the WCP with recommendations for the Maharashtra Forest Department and the **Chapter -11** guides through 'The way Forward' as the spin-off of the WCP.

The WCP so prepared is expected to be a 'Guidance Document' for the Maharashtra Forest Department and is expected to be a ready reckoner for the DBSIL since they are supposed to inhabit the landscape during all the stages of the projects and even thereafter. It is expected to promote coordination between the Maharashtra Forest Department, the DBSIL and other stakeholders in the region.

Recommendations

Implementation Persecutive of the WCP

The following Strategy is recommended for the Implementation of the Wildlife Conservation Plan (WCP).

1. Mitigation and control of the principal sources of pressure on wildlife, biodiversity and ecosystems services.
2. Capacity to manage land uses and knowledge at different scales of social organization (local, regional, national) in order to achieve conservation and development objectives, including financial sustainability.
3. Mechanisms that ensure public participation and governance at sufficient scale as to define measures to monitor progress toward meeting objectives.

Future Perspective for the DBSIL, Unit -Ninaidevi, Kokrud Project

It is worth mentioning that the current project is an expansion of the existing set-up of the DBSIL at the said location. Based on the findings of the Wildlife Conservation Plan, it may be concluded that the DBSIL Project in its developmental and operational phase is not expected to inflict much adverse impact on the IWCPA in the ESZ. The adverse impact of the project is expected to be very low since the area is located in a human dominated landscape. Some mitigation measures and mechanisms have been proposed for the DBSIL to address through their resources to support the efforts of the Maharashtra Forest Department in conservation of wildlife in the IWCPA in the ESZ. The proposed mitigation cost is Rs.40.87 Lacs. This Wildlife Conservation Plan prepared as per the directives from the Competent Authority in the Government of Maharashtra and/ or the Government of India, is itself one major mitigation measure which provides a long-term planning guideline for the area for years to come.

The WCP has come out with and elaborated upon various perspective measures for the Maharashtra Forest Department (MFD), for long term conservation of wildlife and biodiversity in the IWCPA, the EWCAP and thereby the part of the ESZ concerned. The long-term prescriptions suggested and the 'Strategy and Action' proposed may be adopted by the MFD, from its own resources, in a phase-wise manner, as per the availability of funds. The WCP is expected to be a 'torch bearer' for the long-term conservation of wildlife in the region.

Layout of the Wildlife Conservation Plan

Chapter 1 - Introduction-

Chapter 2 -The Current Context – Why develop a WCP.

Chapter 3 -Defining the Study Area of the WCP – Mapping of various spatial layers.

Chapter 4 - Methodology for the WCP

Chapter 5 - Existing Status/Scenario (Component 1 to 7)

- a) Component 1 - Spatial Database Generation and Analysis
- b) Component 2 - Human Wildlife Conflict
- c) Component 3 – Regulatory Settings
- d) Component 4 – Planning and Management Processes in vogue
- e) Component 5 – Cross Sectoral Programs and Plans
- f) Component 6 – Conservation of Multiple Landuse Matrices
- g) Component-7 – Catchment Area Based Habitat Management

Chapter 6 - Management Prescriptions

Chapter 7 - Proposed Strategy and Action

Chapter 8- Monitoring and Evaluation Protocol

Chapter 9- WCP Implementation Costs and Outlay

Chapter 10- Conclusion and Recommendations

Chapter 11 - Way Forward