

F. No. 1-7/2012 WL  
Government of India  
Ministry of Environment and Forests  
(Wildlife Division)

ParyavaranBhawan,  
CGO Complex, Lodhi Road,  
New Delhi-110003  
Dated: 17 February 2012

**OFFICE MEMORANDUM**

**Sub: Setting up of a team of Experts on Sigur Elephant Corridor.**

Tamil Nadu Government a few years ago had initiated the process of acquisition of land for Sigur Elephant Corridor. Various communications of the State Forest Department of the time indicated the area to be so acquired at less than 600 acres. However, while considering the PIL WP 10098/08 regarding the illegal occupations in the Sigur elephant corridor area of Tamil Nadu, the Hon'ble High Court of Madras, caused to set up an Expert Committee in 2009 to study the elephant corridors in the said area, vis-à-vis the various reports published on the subject of elephant corridors in the Nilgiris District of Tamil Nadu. Based on the recommendation of the Expert Committee, Tamil Nadu Government issued orders notifying the area proposed by the Committee, i.e., 4,225 acres as elephant corridor, which was much higher than the area earlier proposed to be acquired by the State Government.

Hon'ble High Court in its order dated 07.04.2011 in the Writ Petition No. 10098/08, upheld the declaration of the expanded elephant corridor of 4,225 acres based on the recommendations of the Expert Committee and directed the resort owners and other private land owners to vacate and hand over the vacant possession of the lands falling within the notified 'elephant corridor' to the District Collector, Nilgiris within three months. This decision of the Hon'ble High Court has been challenged through a number of SLPs filed in the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. In the SLPs CC 15958/2011 and 16898/2011 filed against this order, Hon'ble Supreme Court of India has ordered the MoEF, who is one of the respondents, to file a report and also observed that it was open to the National Board for Wildlife to furnish comments on the report of the Committee set up by Tamil Nadu Government.

As the chain of actions related to this case took place in the State of Tamil Nadu under the auspices of the Tamil Nadu Government, it has been considered necessary to go into the details of the court cases and the related documents before firming up an opinion in the Ministry on this issue. Therefore, Ministry of Environment and Forests has decided to form a Team of Experts to examine in detail all matters related to the Sigur Elephant Corridor. Constitution of the team is as under:

1. Shri S.S.Bisht, PCCF, West Bengal and Former Director Project Elephant, MoEF
2. Dr M.D. Madhusudan, Nature Conservation Foundation, Mysore
3. Shri A.K.Srivastava, Inspector General of Forests (FC), MoEF

**Terms of Reference:**

1. The team will study all the related records and documents including various petitions in Madras High Court and Supreme Court, Court orders in the case and the report of the Expert Committee etc. in consultation with the Forest Department authorities of Tamil Nadu for a clear understanding of the intent of the various court cases and the action of the State Government related to the orders passed by it.
2. The team will undertake field visits and interact with the relevant stakeholders including local communities in the area for a clear understanding of the matters pending in various courts related to the elephant corridors identified and declared by the State Government.
3. The team will submit a report, based on the field visits, consultations and study.
4. The team would submit its report in two months and latest by 25<sup>th</sup> April 2012.
5. State Forest Department of Tamil Nadu will provide all necessary cooperation to the Team in facilitating field visits and interaction with stakeholders to enable completion of report by the team on time.
6. The Committee would be free to co-opt any expert as per requirement.
7. TA/DA to non-official members would be admissible as per SR 190.

This issues with the approval of the competent authority.



**(Dr S K Khanduri)**  
**Inspector General of Forest (WL)**  
**For Director, Project Elephant**

**Distribution:**

1. All members of the team of experts.
2. Principal Secretary (Environment and Forests) Tamil Nadu for kind information and necessary action
3. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests Tamil Nadu for necessary action
4. **Copy to:**
  1. PPS to Hon'ble MEF
  2. PPS to Secretary (E&F).
  3. PPS to DGF&SS, MoEF.
  4. PPS to Addl. DGF (WL), MoEF.
  5. PS to IGF(WL), MoEF
  6. PS to IGF (FC), MoEF
  7. PS to IGF and Director, Project Elephant, MoEF.
  8. NIC Cell- with a request to kindly upload the O.M. on the website of MoEF.