

ESTABLISHMENT

OF

FISH SANCTUARIES

MEGHALAYA STATE AQUACULTURE MISSION

MINI MISSION –III

ESTABLISHMENT OF FISH SANCTUARIES IN THE STATE OF MEGHALAYA

Meghalaya is blessed with a very rich and diverse Inland aquatic ecosystem having a wide variety of aquatic resources such as Rivers, Streams, lakes, bheels etc. But over the years, due to natural and man-made causes, aquatic bio-diversity in open waters has been declining sharply. Killing of fish by explosives and poisoning is commonly practiced in the State, specially in the natural rivers and streams where there is no protection. It is very essential to undertake necessary attempts to conserve and enhance aquatic bio-diversity. Hence establishment of sanctuaries becomes necessary. It is our responsibility to protect the pristine river stretches and native fish for the world around us, and the future generations. One of the strategies to be adopted for protecting and conserving fish species from extinction, as also for increasing fish diversity in the State is through the establishment of Fish Sanctuaries.

Sanctuary is a place of safety, a nature reserve or a place where the endangered, the threatened and the vulnerable are cared for. The Government of Meghalaya, as part of the Meghalaya State Aquaculture Mission activities, intends to create Fish Sanctuaries in potential water bodies of the State with the active involvement of the communities/village authorities etc. It is targeted that in a span of 5 years (2012-17) about 200 sanctuaries will be created in the State. The general importance of Fish Sanctuaries, selection of sites, management strategies to be adopted, are outlined below:-

(1) Importance of Fish Sanctuaries:

- Protect fish from pollution,
- Provide breeding and feeding grounds,
- Enhance and preserve aquatic bio-diversity,
- Increasing the abundance of threatened fish species,
- Improving the livelihoods for local people.
- Protect other aquatic fauna and flora etc.

(2) Criteria of selection of sites

- Fish Sanctuaries are to be located in natural environment, safe from human interference.
- The site so selected should have facilities for creation of a water pool in flowing water with a minimum area of 0.1 ha or 100 running meters and a minimum depth of 1.5 – 2 meters during dry season.
- The site should not be threatened by any future siltation.
- Relatively slow water current.
- It should already have a diverse stock of fish species viz Mahseer, and other indigenous species and in certain cases where stock have diminished, fresh stock of Mahseer and indigenous will be introduced.
- The sanctuary area should have good productivity in terms of plants, plankton and invertebrates to support fish and other fauna.
- It should be established in such a place where commercial fishing can be prohibited or restricted throughout the whole year. Community resolutions to that effect are absolutely essential
- Community based organisations so selected to take up the projects should be organised bodies with past record of activity in conservation and must be committed to protect and maintain the sanctuaries, after completion.
- The location of some fish sanctuary should be chosen by the local communities themselves.

(3) MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

(i) Surveys:

To achieve the objectives for establishment of the Fish Sanctuaries the Department will conduct the preliminary field studies to identify the possible sites, to be given sanctuary status. This would include comprehensive information on fish resources, stock structure, production trends, natural habitat, exploitation pattern etc. Permission from the local Headman, Sirdars, and Nokmas etc will be obtained for camping of the officials on the sites during survey. An awareness programme with the village authorities to brief them on the purpose of the survey will be organised.

(ii) Community based Fish Sanctuary:

The most important part of creation of sanctuaries is protection against poaching, illegal fishing etc. Community management, in collaboration with the department of fisheries will be more effective in achieving the desired results. This is a very important factor as it is felt that without a community involvement it is not possible to establish and maintain a sanctuary. The true meaning of conservation and protection of our bio-diversity will become a reality only through the commitment and active participation of the people specially those residing near the potential sanctuary sites. Rombagre Fish Sanctuary in West Garo Hills managed by the community is one of the few examples which has achieved tremendous success.

(iii) Mass Awareness Programme:

Various components of mass media strategies will be intensively used to sensitize the people specially those residing near the areas where sanctuaries will be established about the importance of bio-diversity in general and conservation of indigenous and endemic species in particular. This would include public meetings, poster campaigns, slogans, distribution of leaflets/pamphlets, orientation workshops for the Village authorities, to name a few.

(iv) Identification, demarcation of sanctuaries:

Selected areas to be taken up for conservation will be properly demarcated with distinguishable symbols like signboards, flags, bamboo, etc so that people can easily understand that the area is a protected one.

(v) Guarding the Sanctuaries:

To find shelter, protection, food etc, fish congregate in a sanctuary, especially in dry season. Steps for guarding the Sanctuary will be taken up by the Department with the communities. The River Guards of the Department will be deployed to assist the village authorities/communities etc for protection of the sanctuaries. The support of local youth wherever necessary, will also be enlisted to act as watch and ward at strategically important sites, breeding pockets and confluences during the breeding or migration season of the fish. Stringent action against offenders involved in the indiscriminate killing of fishes will be taken as per the rules and procedures laid down by the village durbar.

(vi) Exposure Trips:

Office Bearers of the organizations selected as beneficiaries under the programme will also be taken for an exposure trip to the already established fish sanctuaries viz. Rombagre Fish Sanctuary, West Garo Hills, Nongbareh in Jaintia Hills etc.

(vii) Assessment:

To observe the impact of the fish sanctuary and refining management plans, the Department will collect regular data on siltation rate, water quality, information on fish catches in neighbouring areas (fish moving out of the sanctuary), records of visitors, poaching incidence, fish stock, benefit derived by the Communities / SHGs etc.

Establishment of Fish Sanctuaries

Norms of the scheme:

1. Financial investment will be made by the Department to create sanctuaries in the potential areas/part of the rivers streams etc. having facilities for creation of water pool in flowing water with a minimum area of 0.1 ha or 100 running meters and a minimum depth of 1.5 – 2 meters during dry season.
2. The investment will be to a maximum of ` 5 lakhs on each sanctuary which will be exclusively on fishery oriented activities. Viz creation of water pool, construction of Watch-tower/ view point, purchase of fish seeds, Signboards and other materials such as Jungle boots, Search lights, uniforms, raincoats etc for the personnel engaged in patrolling duties. The DEO's/SDEOs will have to work out the details in this regard and furnish a detailed estimate within the amount of ` 5.00 lakhs supported with justification.
3. If necessary, the level of the water pool will be raised by construction of Mini- Barrages. These Barrages will be constructed by utilising the locally available materials with least disturbance to the natural environment. The Length and width of the Mini-Barrages to be constructed will depend on the conditions of each site.
4. The Communities/Self-Help-Groups etc. selected as partners, will have to contribute in terms of labour wherever necessary.
5. The objective is for enhancement of the existing stocks in the selected sanctuaries and introduction of other species is restricted.
6. Survey, media campaigns, orientation programmes , Workshops, Seminars etc for the villages with potential will be part and parcel of the scheme in which fund required for this purpose will be allotted for each District / Sub-Divisions.

7. Other expenditure involved, such as construction of footpaths, approach roads, cafeteria, Watch tower etc. will be dove-tailed with C&RD, Tourism, P.W.D. Department etc.
8. An area 200 meter upstream and 100 meter downstream will be prohibited from any fishing activities.
9. On completion the sanctuaries will be handed over to the NGOs/Self Help Groups/ Communities etc. for management who would run them in conformity with conditions laid down by the Department with no further investment to be made by the Department in the project.
10. Commitment of the Communities / NGOs etc. to manage the project after investment will be one of the key criteria for selection. An agreement in this regard will be signed between FFDA / Department of Fisheries with the selected organizations prior to the implementation of the scheme.
11. The revenue earned from the various activities of the sanctuaries will exclusively go to the NGOs / Self Help Groups / Communities who have been authorized by the Department to manage these sanctuaries. Such revenues will help the organizations to meet the expenditure in the management of the sanctuaries and thereby making the project sustainable.

Director of Fisheries-cum-
Chief Executive Officer, FFDA,
Meghalaya, Shillong

Implementation process:

1. Wide publicity for the scheme will be given in the local media, both print and electronic, for the benefit of all the eligible and interested Communities / Self-Help-Groups / Village Authorities etc. of the State.
2. Application forms and the filled-in forms will be issued and received through the Offices of the Superintendent of Fisheries-cum-District Executive Officers / Sub-Divisional Fishery Officers-cum-Sub-Divisional Executive Officers.
3. The respective S.Fs-cum-DEOs will then scrutinize the applications, documents of the applicants.
4. The DEOs, SDEOs assisted by the Technical Staff / Programme Managers will personally inspect the sites and assess the feasibility /non-feasibility of each sites.
5. After inspection, the DEOs / SDEOs will then prepare a list of activities to be taken up for the feasible projects. They will prepare estimates for the fishery oriented programmes, including holding of awareness programmes, workshops etc.
6. Other programmes connected with the development of sanctuaries, like construction of footpaths, approach roads, etc. the DEOs / SDEOs will have to approach the concerned Departments like PWD, Tourism Department etc. for preparation of estimates or engage the Junior Engineers of the Department for the purpose.
7. The completed list of feasible projects supported by Detail Project Reports (DPR), item of works with estimated amount to be taken up, expected benefits etc. will then be placed before the District Aquaculture Mission Committee (DMAC), headed by the Deputy Commissioners of the respective Districts. The Deputy Commissioners also will indicate funding support from other schemes viz., NREGS, NRLM, BRGF, MSDP, MRDS, NERCOMP etc. in a convergence mode.
8. The Member Secretary will convene the Committee after obtaining due approval from the Chairman of the District Aquaculture Mission Committee (DAMC).

9. The DAMC will then scrutinize, select and prepare a list of recommended applications and submit the same to the CEO, FFDA for accordance final approval with respect to the fisheries related activities.
10. The CEO, FFDA will then process and in case of item of works which still require convergence with other Departments, the same will be submitted to the Government in Fisheries Department, for taking up the same with the converging Departments.
11. In the meantime the CEO, FFDA will authorize the DEOs / SDFOs to issue work orders to the selected organisations, etc to start the work for activities concerning fisheries and other converging activities will be taken up by the converging Departments, in due course.
12. The CEO FFDA will then place the requisite fund for implementation as recommended by the DAMC with the respective DEOs /SDEOs.
13. Implementation of fishery programmes viz. Construction of mini-barrages, creation of water pool, watch tower / view point, purchase of fish seeds, signboards, materials involved in patrolling duties in accordance with the estimates approved by the CEO FFDA will be done by the organisations etc selected to implement the scheme under strict supervision of the DEOs / SDEOs.
14. The DEOs/SDEOs will release the fund to the selected organisation in 3 (three) instalments viz. 40 % of the total sanctioned fund to be released as 1st instalment for starting the works. The 2nd instalment of 30% to be released after the DEOs /SDEOs are satisfied that the quantum of work done commensurate with the 1st instalment released. The final instalment of 30% will be released to the selected organisations, etc for purchase of fish seeds, patrolling materials, camping tents, etc. All these activities are to be strictly supervised by the DEOs / SDEOs.
15. Item of works to be contributed by the selected organisations, in terms of labour will be identified, assessed by the DEOs / SDEOs.
16. Prior to the commencement of works, the DEOs / SDEOs will also submit proposal accompanied with estimates to the C.E.O. FFDA for organizing public meetings, poster campaigns, distribution of pamphlets/leaflets specifically in those areas where

sanctuaries will be established including exposure trips of the beneficiaries to the already existing sanctuaries of the State. All the exercises to be carried out in collaboration with the Communities, NGOs etc.

17. After finalization by the Department with the converging Departments, construction of footpaths, approach roads, cafeteria, etc. will be executed by the concerned Departments financing the projects.
18. On completion, the sanctuaries will be handed over to the selected organizations. The DEOs / SDEOs are to render all possible technical assistance to the organizations for running and management of the projects as well as monitoring of the same.
19. They are also to document the implementation from inception to completion followed by submission of quarterly reports to the CEO FFDA on the impact, progress, and achievement of the programme. They will also collect data on siltation rate, water quality, information on fish catches in neighbouring areas, records of visitors, poaching incidents, fish stock, benefit derived by the communities etc. on a quarterly basis.
20. They will also bring to the notice of the Government any suggestions, plans etc. for improvement of the Sanctuaries.

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Chief Executive Officer, FFDA,
Meghalaya, Shillong

MEGHALAYA STATE AQUACULTURE MISSION

APPLICATION FORM FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FISH SANCTUARIES

1. Name and address, designation of the Applicant representing the organization

I. Phone No. :

II. Fax :

III. E-mail ID :

2. Category :

Self-Help-Groups / Co-operative Societies / Communities etc. :

3. Experience of the Organization with regards to sanctuaries, if any :

4. Location of the Fish Sanctuary :

I. District

II. C & RD Block

III. Village

IV. Police Station

V. Name of the river / streams etc. for development of sanctuaries

VI. Name of the villages adjacent to the sanctuaries

VII. Controlling Authority

VIII. Other information.

5. Length / Area to be declared as fish sanctuary :

6. Length / Area available for creation of water pool :

7. Type of fishes presently available :
8. Is the area prone to dynamiting, poisoning or any other means of indiscriminate killing of fish?
9. Is approach road available?
10. Does the area have facilities for creation of cafeteria, lodges, amusement parks etc. :

Signature of the applicant

Documents to be enclosed:

1. Identity proof of the applicant.
2. Name and address of the Office Bearers of the Organizations
3. Copy of registration of the organization, if any.
4. No objection certificate from the Competent Authority / Local Headman / Nokmas etc.
5. Layout of the Sanctuaries.
6. Non-encumbrance Certificate in case of NGOs / SHGs.

PROCESS CHART OF IMPLEMENTATION

