

CITIZENS CHARTER

Citizens Charter of the Kerala State Biodiversity Board

1. VISION

Conservation of biodiversity and its sustainable utilization for the benefit of human beings.

2. MISSION

To conserve the biological diversity of the State and its sustainable use, fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the use of biological resources and generation and dissemination of knowledge thereof.

3. WHO WE ARE

In accordance with the provisions of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 (Central Act 18 of 2003), the Science, Technology & Environment Department (STED) took up the proposal for setting up of Kerala State Biodiversity Board (KSBB) in October, 2003. Based on the approval by the Chief Minister on 25.01.2005, the notification constituting the Board was made in February 2005 [GO (Ms) No. 1/2005/STED dated 28.2.2005] and published in the gazette on 01.06.2005. Until such time the Board was fully functional, it was incubated under STED/Kerala State Council for Science Technology and Environment (KSCSTE). During February 2006 the new Environment Department was formed in Kerala [vide order GO (Ms) No. 10/2006/GAD dated 6.1.2006] and the KSBB was transferred to the Environment Department [vide order GO (Ms) No.64/2006/GAD dated 16.2.2006]. The headquarters of the Board is at the State capital, Thiruvananthapuram.

4. WHAT WE DO

The Board is proposed to perform the following functions:

- a) advise the State Government, subject to any guidelines issued by the Central Government, on matters relating to the conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use of its components and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of biological resources
- b) regulate by granting of approvals or otherwise requests for commercial utilisation or bio-survey and bio-utilisation of any biological resource by Indians; and
- c) perform such other functions as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act or as may be prescribed by the State Government.

5. PROGRAMMES UNDERTAKEN BY US

Major programmes undertaken by the board include:

I. Preparation of People's Biodiversity Register (PBR)

One of the mandates of the Biodiversity Board is to facilitate preparation of Biodiversity Registers for each Local Self Government (LSG) involving the local communities. The PBR has to be prepared under the overall supervision of the Biodiversity Management Committee (BMC) of each LSG. The PBR is highly significant in the context of issues related to bio-piracy. By preparing PBR, the LSGs establish its ownership on the Biodiversity and the traditional knowledge thereon and can utilise the bio resource equitably, ensuring sustainable development.

II. Handbook for identification of species in the field

Illustrated handbooks to help identification of various groups of plants and animals are being prepared. These illustrated handbooks will help the volunteers in the preparation of the People's Biodiversity Registers. Some of the handbooks are also being prepared in Malayalam.

III. Enhancement of Agro-biodiversity conservation programme

The Board initiated a pilot project with specific objectives of bringing back the microbial, floral and faunal diversity of an agro ecosystem at Padetty in Erumayur Panchayat of Palakkad. This programme was initiated in collaboration with the Agricultural department, local panchayat and around 66 farming communities in the area along with Paaesekhara samithies Scientific studies on flora, litter fauna, benthic fauna and soil chemistry, pesticide residue analysis in collaboration with experts in the field have also being carried out. 'Thanal' Thiruvananthapuram, an NGO has provided consultancy services for conversion to organic cultivation and field level training. Changes in the farming and conventional farming areas have been compared and documented, floral and faunal diversity and toxic accumulation in the two sites have also been compared.

IV. Wetland Conservation Programme

A model project in the Kole wetlands in Veliamkode Panchayat in Malappuram District was undertaken to demonstrate the sustainable use of wetlands in improving the wetland ecosystem at the same time with a view to improve the livelihood of the local people. Scientific studies were also undertaken to evaluate the changes that have occurred on the wetland biodiversity on account of the interventions. Interventions include rice/ fish farm cultivation around organic farming practices. The local people got benefits and have come forward to adopt organic farming practices on there on. The outcome of cultivation has been documented and telecasted in the Doordarsan.

V. Survey of fish diversity in major rivers of Kerala

To depletion of fish diversity, together with accumulation of pesticides and heavy metals in the fishes of all the rivers of the State and a survey is being carried out in association with experts. The River Research Centre, Chalakudy is coordinating the various activities involved in the project.

VI. Nature awareness programme

One of the regular programmes of the Board is to conduct nature awareness programme for various sectors of the society such as Government officials, judiciary, media and NGOs, schools, colleges and the public. At school level, activities are also being carried out through ecoclubs.

VII. Mahatmaji Jaivodhyanam

This is a programme carried out through educational institutions and aimed at establishing a live collection of a few species of plants in a specially earmarked area called as Mahatmaji Jaivodhyanam. The species of plant provided under this belonged to Rare, Endangered, Threatened (RET species) or endemic category of plants of high conservation value.

VIII. Children's Ecological Congress

Children's Ecological Congress is being conducted every year since 2008. State level competitions are held for various items and the school which scores maximum points is given a Rolling Trophy.

IX. Green Award

Green awards are instituted since 2008, for contributions to the biodiversity and nature conservation in the state for individuals for their life time contributions, to encourage and promote individuals for lifetime contributions, organisations, institutions, schools, colleges, media persons, in Kerala for contributions made in their field of biodiversity/ nature conservation.

X. Biodiversity Heritage Sites

Five different ecosystems have been identified in the State to be declared as Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS). They are Kalasamala at Kunnamkulam, Thrissur with a grove of critically endangered tree species of *syzigium travancoricum*; the Connolly's Teak Plantation, the first teak plantation in the world located at Nilambur in Malappuram; Paliyeri Mookambika sacred grove at Kannur with the habitat of an endemic tree *Myristica fauta*; the Pathiramanal island in Vembanad Lake in Alappuzha with unique wetland ecosystem and the Iringole Kavu in Perumbavoor, at Ernakulam, the largest sacred grove in Kerala, with rich biodiversity of flora and fauna. The concept of declaring Biodiversity Heritage Sites is with a view to conserve unique ecosystems in a participatory manner.

XI. Documentary films

Two short films viz., 1). Kerala – the hotspot of Biodiversity and 2). Farming our Future – A film on organic farming have been produced and are being projected at various places, especially schools. The third one on mangroves of Kerala is nearing completion.

6. OUR SERVICE STANDARDS

Our efforts will be to conserve the biodiversity of the State and its sustainable utilization for the benefit of human beings. Our performance may be measured against timely advice given to the State Government, on matters relating to the conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use of its components and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of biological resources.

7. HOW YOU CAN HELP

To help us to perform better, we need you to inform us about any activity which may endanger the biodiversity in the state.

8. HOW TO GIVE US FEED BACK

We welcome comments from our citizens to help us to make our service better. Feed backs including complements, suggestions and complaints are welcome as they help us to improve our services.

Should you wish to provide feedback including any complaints about our service, contact The Chairman, Kerala State Biodiversity Board, Thiruvananthapuram.

9. CHECKING OUR PERFORMANCE

We will evaluate our services against the standards we have set out in this charter to see if we are meeting these standards.

We will periodically review the standards in the charter to ensure continuous improvement in service delivery.

A copy of the charter is available at our internet site “keralabiodiversity.org”

10. HOW YOU COULD CONTACT US

The various persons in The Kerala State Biodiversity Board are to be contacted for various purposes as follows:

| Sl. No. | Person to be contacted | Designation | Telephone No. / Fax No. / E.mail |
|---------|------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Dr. R.V. Varma | Chairman | 0471-2740240 (office) 9446423655 (Mob.) 0471-2740234 (Fax No.) varmarv@gmail.com (E-mail) |
| 2 | Dr. K.P.Laladhas | Member Secretary | 0471-2741241 (Office) 9447271034 (Mob.) 0471-2740234 (Fax No.) laladhas@gmail.com (E-mail) |
| 3 | Satheesh Chandran K.S. | Administrative Officer | 0471-2740240 (Office) 0471-2740234 (Fax No.) |
| 4 | Dr.C.P. Shaji | Principal Scientific Officer | 0471-2740240 (Office) 9497627825 (Mob.) 0471-2740234 (Fax No.) shajibarb@gmail.com (E-mail) |

11. FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT OF THE CHARTER

Citizens may feel free to write in the following address, their comments and suggestions for further improvement of the Charter.

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