



ENVIS NEWSLETTER

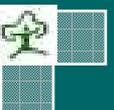
April – June, 2012

ENVIS Centre, Environment Department, Government of Maharashtra,
Mumbai



UNDERSTANDING REPORT OF THE WESTERN GHATS ECOLOGY EXPERT PANEL MAHARASHTRA PERSPECTIVE

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Editorial

India is one of the countries blessed with rich biodiversity. Western Ghats & Eastern Himalayas rank in the Biodiversity Hotspots of the World. Such biodiverse regions need to be protected & regulated in a manner to conserve its uniqueness. In view of this, MoEF had constituted the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP) in March 2010 for the conservation, protection and rejuvenation of the Western Ghats Region. MoEF has recently published the report made by WGEEP on its website for receiving comments / suggestions from public.

In this newsletter we have tried to give the important contents of the report for easy understanding about this important issue. The newsletter has focused on 'Maharashtra perspective' of the WGEEP report. I hope this will certainly help everyone to understand the recommendations of WGEEP, so that individual opinion can be communicated to MoEF.

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1. What is WGEEP?

The Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP) was constituted by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), Government of India by an order dated 4 March 2010. The panel comprised of 14 members & it was chaired by Prof. Madhav Gadgil.

Panel Members of WGEEP:

Prof. Madhav Gadgil	Chairman
Shri B.J. Krishnan	Member
Dr. K.N. Ganeshaiyah	Member
Dr. V.S. Vijayan	Member
Prof. (Ms.) Renee Borges	Member
Prof. R. Sukumar	Member
Dr. Ligia Noronha	Member
Ms Vidya S. Nayak	Member
Dr. D. K. Subramaniam	Member
Dr. R.V. Varma Chairman, Kerala State Biodiversity Board	Member (ex-officio)
Chairman, National Biodiversity Authority (NBA)	Member (ex-officio)
Prof S.P. Gautam Chairman, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)	Member (ex-officio)
Dr. R.R. Navalgund Director, Space Application Centre (SAC)	Member (ex-officio)
Dr. G.V. Subrahmanyam Advisor (RE), Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India, New Delhi	Member-Secretary (ex- officio)

2. Why WGEEP?

- In view of the environmental sensitivity and ecological significance of the Western Ghats region and the complex interstate nature of its geography, as well as possible impacts of climate change on this region, MoEF constituted the WGEEP.
- Western Ghat - The term Western Ghats refers to the practically unbroken hill chain (with the exception of the Palakkad Gap) or escarpment running roughly in a north-south direction, for about 1500 km parallel to the Arabian sea coast, from the river Tapi (about 21° 16' N) down to just short of Kanyakumari (about 8°19' N) at the tip of the Indian peninsula.

Table 1 - Geographical attributes of the Western Ghats

Northern limit	8°19' 8" - 21° 16' 24" (N)
Eastern limit	72° 56' 24" - 78° 19' 40" (E)
Total area	129037 sq km
End-to-end length	1490 km
Min width	48 km (in Maharashtra)
Max width	210 km (in Tamilnadu)
Western Ghats States	Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamilnadu
Administrative Units	Six states, 44 Districts, and 142 Talukas

Western Ghat Region



reaches its highest diversity towards the southern tip in Kerala with its high statured, rich tropical rain forests.

- The Western Ghats are second only to the Eastern Himalaya as a treasure trove of biological diversity in India. Originally recognized as among the several global 'hotspots of biodiversity', the Western Ghats along with its geographical extension in the wet zone of Sri Lanka are now also considered one of the eight '**hottest hot spots**' of biodiversity (Myers et al. 2000).
- The Western Ghats receive heavy precipitation of 2000 mm or more a year. The eastern slopes of the Ghats are much drier than the Western face. The western slopes of the Ghats have a natural cover of evergreen forest, which changes to moist and then dry deciduous types as one comes to the eastern slopes. The vegetation

- The great topographic heterogeneity (from sea level to 2695 m at its highest point, the Anaimudi peak) and a strong rainfall gradient (annual precipitation of <50 cm in sheltered valleys in the east to >700 cm along west-facing slopes) combine to give rise to a tremendous diversity of life forms and vegetation types in Western Ghats. Many of these are critical habitats for plants and animals.
- The importance of the Western Ghats in terms of its biodiversity can be seen from the known inventory of its plant and animal groups, and the levels of endemism in these taxa (Gunawardene et al. 2007).

Table 2 – Biodiversity and Endemism in Western Ghats

Sr No	Flora / Fauna	No of species	Endemism*
1	Flowering plants	4000 (27% of the country's total species)	56% of evergreen trees are endemic
2	Lower plant groups		
	Mosses	682 species	28% endemics
	Liverworts	280 species	43% endemics
3	Invertebrates		
	Ants	350	20% endemic
	Butterflies	330	11% endemic
	Odonates (dragonflies and damselflies)	174	40% endemic
	Mollusks (land snails)	269	76%
4	Fish	288 species	41%
5	Ambhibian fauna	220 species	78%
6	Reptiles	225	62%
7	Birds	500	35%
8	Mammals	120	20%

* Endemism is the ecological state of being unique to a defined geographic location, such as an island, nation or other defined zone, or habitat type.

- Similarly, the Ghats are unique in its caecilian diversity harbouring 16 of the country's 20 known species, with all 16 species being endemic.

- The Western Ghats region harbours the largest global populations of the Asian elephant, and possibly of other mammals such as tiger, dhole, and gaur.
- The Western Ghats also harbour a number of wild relatives of cultivated plants, including pepper, cardamom, mango, jackfruit and plantain. This biological wealth has paid rich dividends over the years. In fact, the tract was famous for its wild produce of pepper, cardamom, sandal and ivory.
- The high human population density and major transformation of the landscape since the mid-18th century also emphasize the urgency of conservation of the Ghats and sustainable use of its resources.
- It is estimated that not more than about 7% of the area of the Western Ghats is presently under primary vegetation cover, though a much larger area is under secondary forest or some form of tree cover.
- Nearly 15% of the Ghats is under the Protected Area system. This diversity has been in continual decline over the last century and more especially in recent decades, with many biological communities and types being almost totally eliminated.

3. What are the Terms of Reference for WGEEP?

- To assess the current status of ecology of the Western Ghats region.
- To demarcate areas within the Western Ghats Region which need to be notified as ecologically sensitive and to recommend for notification of such areas as ecologically sensitive zones under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. In doing so, the Panel shall review the existing reports such as the Mohan Ram Committee Report, Hon'ble Supreme Court's decisions, recommendations of the National Board for Wildlife and consult all concerned State Governments.
- To make recommendations for the conservation, protection and rejuvenation of the Western Ghats Region following a comprehensive consultation process involving people and Governments of all the concerned States.
- To suggest measures for effective implementation of the notifications issued by the Government of India in the Ministry of Environment and Forests declaring specific areas in the Western Ghats Region as eco-sensitive zones under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- To recommend the modalities for the establishment of Western Ghats Ecology Authority under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 which will be a professional body to manage the ecology of the region and to ensure its sustainable development with the support of all concerned states.
- To deal with any other relevant environment and ecological issues pertaining to Western Ghats Region, including those which may be referred to it by the Central Government in the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

- The Ministry has subsequently asked the Panel to include in its mandate (a) the entire stretch of Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts, including the coastal region, and to specifically examine the (b) Gundia and (c) Athirappilly Hydroelectric projects. (d) Recommendations with regard to the moratorium on new mining licenses in Goa.

4. What are the activities executed by WGEEP?

- WGEEP initiated its activities on March 30, 2010 with a meeting in Bengaluru. It has subsequently held total 14 Panel meetings & concluded with a meeting on August 2011.
- Obtained extensive inputs from the civil society, Government agencies and technical experts with the help of a series of 42 Commissioned papers, 7 brainstorming sessions, 1 Expert Consultative Meeting, 8 consultations with Government agencies and 40 consultations with civil society groups, and 14 field visits.
- Extensive inputs from both Government agencies and civil society groups in Goa
- WGEEP set up a public website to obtain civil society inputs.
- Compilation of a report which comprises Categorization of the Western Ghats into three zones of varied ecological sensitivity, broad sectoral guidelines for each of these zones & broad framework for establishment of Western Ghats Ecology Authority.
- Submitted report to MoEF in August 2011

5. What is the Framework of WGEEP Report?

- WGEEP report is divided in two Parts, Part I and Part II.
- Part I- Main report of the WGEEP which deals with all the terms of reference
- Part II- contains elaborate discussion on current status of ecology of Western Ghats and specific detailed write ups on various sectors such as Land Use and Human Settlements, Water resources, Agriculture (including Horticulture and Plantations), Forestry and Biodiversity, Industry – organized, Mining, Power and Energy, Tourism, Transport and Communication, Education, Science and Technology and Information Management.

▪ Part I of Report

Section 1	Summery
Section 2	Introduction
Section 3	Mandate
Section 4	Organization of the report
Section 5	Activities undertaken
Section 6	Boundaries of the Western Ghats region
Section 7	Setting of the Western Ghats

Section 8	Outlines an inclusive approach to conservation / development issues
Sections 9 & 10	concept of ecologically sensitive areas / zones, development of a Western Ghats Database employed to demarcate ecologically sensitive zones
Section 11	Reviews about current pattern of management of ecologically sensitive areas / zones and experiences of WGEEP with the establishment and management of existing ecologically sensitive areas / zones.
Section 12	Review of the experience of nascent proposals of establishing ecologically sensitive areas / zones around Protected Areas of Western Ghats.
Section 13	Outlines an inclusive approach to conservation / development issues that WGEEP believes should guide further development of ecologically sensitive areas / zones in the Western Ghats and proposes a series of guidelines for regulation of activities that may potentially have environmentally adverse impacts as well as promotion of activities that may potentially have environmentally positive impacts in ecologically sensitive areas / zones 1, 2, and 3 in the Western Ghats.
Section 14	Puts forward WGEEP proposals for the establishment, composition and functioning of the Western Ghats Ecology Authority in the Centre and associated state level Western Ghats Ecology Authorities as well as District Ecology Committees.
Section 15	Reviews and recommendations of WGEEP with respect to Athirappilly and Gundia Hydroelectric projects.
Section 16	Review of the prevalent situation in, and recommendations of WGEEP with respect to Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts.
Section 17	Review of the prevalent situation in and recommendations of WGEEP with respect to mining leases in Goa.
The appendices, annexures and references conclude Part I of the Report	

6. What WGEEP mean by 'Develop Sustainably – Conserve Thoughtfully'?

Development plans should not be cast in a rigid framework, but ought to be tailored to prevalent locality and time-specific conditions with full participation of local communities, a process that has been termed adaptive co-management. What should be 'go' and what should be 'no go' development options ought then to be decided on a case-by-case basis, in tune with the specific environmental and socio-economic context, and aspirations of the local communities.

Such a **system of adaptive co-management** would marry conservation to development, and not treat them as separate, incompatible objectives.

Adaptive co-management -

Adaptive co-management is an emerging approach for governance of social-ecological systems. Novelty of adaptive co-management comes from combining the iterative learning dimension of adaptive management and the linkage dimension of collaborative management in which rights and responsibilities are jointly shared.

Key features of adaptive co-management include:

1. A focus on learning-by-doing
2. Synthesis of different knowledge systems
3. Collaboration and power-sharing among community, regional and national levels
4. Management flexibility

These features can promote an evolving, place-specific governance approach in which strategies are sensitive to feedback (both social and ecological) and oriented towards system resilience and sustainability.

Other important themes in adaptive co-management include improving evaluation of process and outcomes, additional emphasis on power, the role of social capital, and meaningful interactions and trust building as the basis for governance in social-ecological systems.

WGEEP propose to develop a model of conservation and development compatible with each other encompassing the whole of the Western Ghats region.

7. How Ecological Sensitive Zones (ESZs) are classified?

- The term 'Ecologically Sensitive Area' refers to extensive tracts and 'Ecologically Sensitive Zone' refers to specific zones within the extended 'Ecologically Sensitive Area' for which a particular set of regulatory/ promotional activities have been proposed.
- Criteria set by The Pronab Sen Committee (set up in 2000 by MoEF) recommended 'Endemism' as foremost criterion for identification of an Ecologically Sensitive Area & the committee proposed that 'the area of occurrence of every endemic species needs to be protected in its entirety'.
- This is followed by WGEEP and it recommends that the entire Western Ghats tract should be considered as an Ecologically Sensitive Area.
- WGEEP recommends the adoption of a graded or layered approach, and suggests that the entire Western Ghats be characterized as comprising ESZ 1, 2 & 3, as follows-

ESZ 1	Regions of highest sensitivity
ESZ 2	Regions of high sensitivity
ESZ 3	Regions of moderate sensitivity

- These will be complementary to areas already declared as Protected Areas, which will continue to be managed under regulations prescribed by pertinent acts such as the Wildlife Protection Act.
- WGEEP has come up with four colour maps spanning the entire Western Ghats depicting **PAs, and ESZ1, ESZ2 and ESZ3.**
- WGEEP assigned ESZ1, ESZ2 and ESZ3 levels to all the 134 talukas of Western Ghats (except 8 talukas from Goa).
- **Features of ESZ classification are as follows-**
 1. Western Ghats regions of each state are treated separately.
 2. Existing Protected Areas are treated as a fourth separate category.
 3. ESZ1, ESZ2 and ESZ3 status is assigned only to grids outside existing Protected Areas.
 4. ESZ1 status is assigned only to such grids as have a score at least equaling, or higher than the lowest scoring grids falling within existing Protected Areas.
 5. Detailed information such as localities of origin of rivers, laterite plateaus, and localities where local communities have expressed a strong interest in conservation can be used to decide on demarcation of ecologically sensitive localities
 6. The extent of existing Protected Areas plus ESZ1 will not normally exceed 60% of the total area.
 7. The extent of area covered by existing Protected Areas plus ESZ1 and ESZ2 together will be around 75%.
 8. The extent of ESZ3 will normally be around 25% of the total area.

- Grids with scores at the level of Protected Areas and above within the same state be assigned to ESZ 1 category, with the proviso that the total area under PAs and ESZ1 be limited to 60% to balance the development needs of states.
- ~25% of grids with scores at the lower end be assigned to ESZ 3 category, and the balance to ESZ 2.

8. What is the Methodology followed for assigning ESZs?

Development of a spatial database, for over 2200 grids of 5' x 5' or roughly 9 km x 9 km through compilation of all readily available information on topography, land cover and occurrence of biodiversity elements.

1. **Biological attributes:** We propose that demarcation of an ESA shall consider the following components of biological and cultural uniqueness and richness :

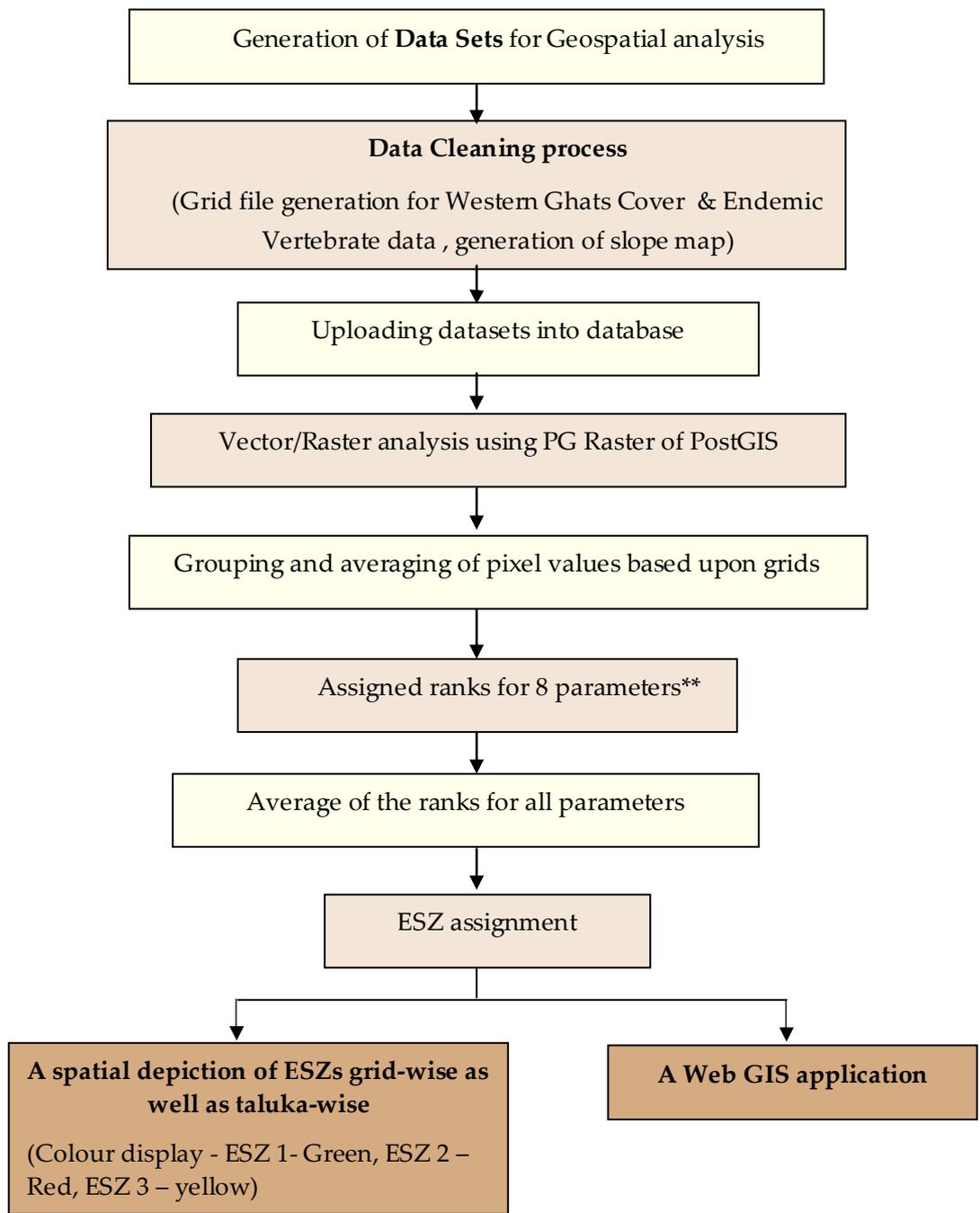
- a. Biodiversity richness: Richness in diversity at all taxonomic groups and hierarchies.
- b. Species Rarity: Rarity of population size, distribution and also rarity in taxonomic representation.
- c. Habitat Richness: Spatial heterogeneity of landscape elements
- d. Productivity: Total biomass productivity
- e. Estimate of biological/ecological resilience: Representation of the plesio-vegetation
- f. Cultural and Historical Significance: Evolutionary–historical value and cultural–historical value of the area

2. **Geo-climatic layers attributes:** These include the range of layers that assess the innate or natural vulnerability of the area. Obviously features such as slope, aspect, altitude, precipitation etc shall be used under the following two component attributes:

- a. Topographic Features: Slope, altitude, aspect etc.,
- b. Climatic Features: Precipitation, number of wet days etc.,
- c. Hazard vulnerability: Natural hazards such as landslides and fires.

3. **Stake Holders Valuation:** It is important to invite the opinion of the public and local bodies especially the Zilla Panchayats, village level political bodies and also other civil societies to enlist the areas that they feel ecologically and environmentally sensitive and use these as important attributes.

Methodology employed in generating and interpreting the Western Ghats Database and assigning ESZs



- ** 8. Parameters for assigning ranks –**
1. Endemic plants : Number of endemic plant species
 2. IUCN max: Number of IUCN Red listed mammal species
 3. Unique percent: Percentage of area covered by unique evergreen ecosystems
 4. Comp3 percent : Percentage of area covered by relatively undisturbed forest with low edge
 5. Forest percent: Percentage of forest area
 6. Elevation
 7. Slope
 8. Riparian Forests/Vegetation (vegetation along riverbanks)

9. What are the recommendations for Maharashtra ?

- WGEEP while demarking the boundaries of Western Ghats, in case of Maharashtra considered the coastline itself as the western edge of the Ghats.
- While important areas such as Dapoli and Guhagar in Ratnagiri District, and secondary ranges of the Western Ghats in Thane and Raigad districts such as Tungreshwar, Manor, Tansa, Vaitarna, Prabal etc have been excluded.
- There are four ESZs constituted in the state of Maharashtra, namely, Murud-Janjira, Dahanu Taluka, Matheran and Mahabaleshwar-Panchgani

Proposed Talukas with 50% or more of their area included within the Western Ghats boundary.

State	No of Districts in the WG	No of Talukas assigned to ESZ1	No Talukas assigned to ESZ2	No Talukas assigned to ESZ3
Gujarat	3	1	1	1
Maharashtra	10	32	4	14
Goa	2	NA	NA	NA
Karnataka	11	26	5	12
Kerala	12	15	2	8
Tamil Nadu*	6	9	2	2
Totals	44	83	14	37

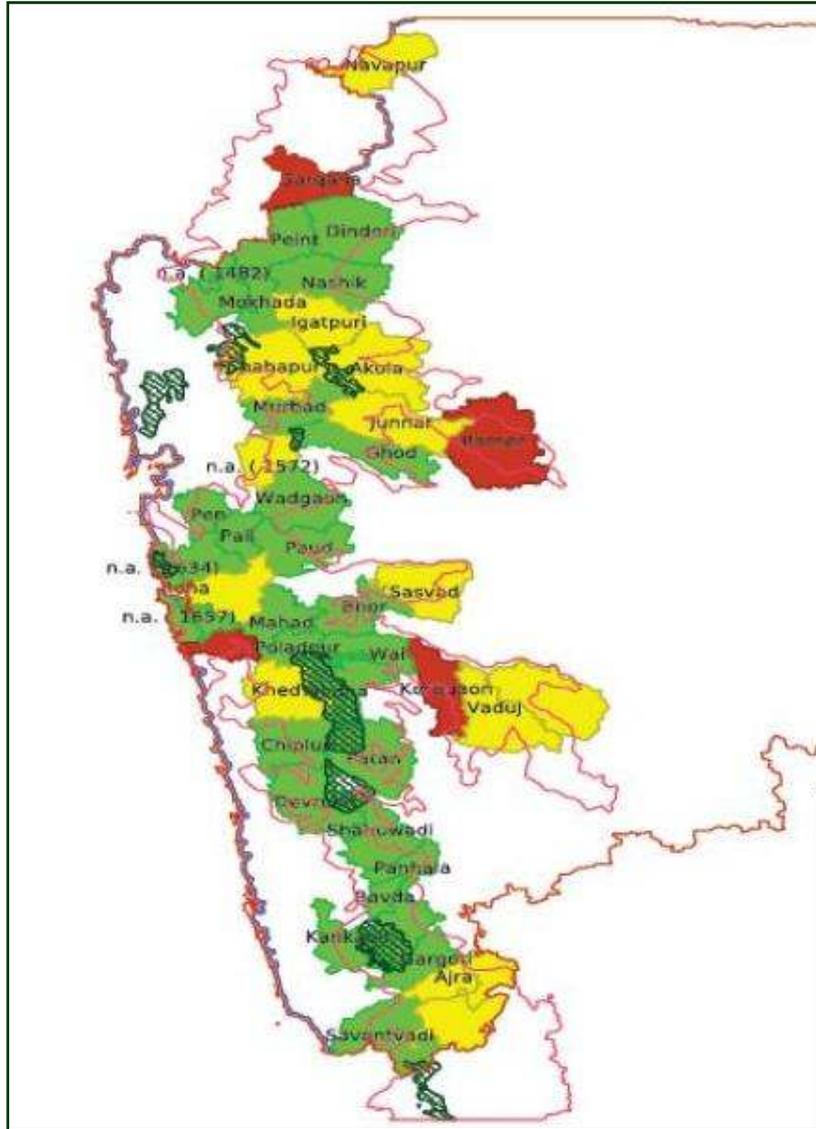
Proposed ESZ1 & ESZ2 Talukas with less than 50% of their area included within the Western Ghats boundary

State	No of Districts in the WG	No of Talukas assigned to ESZ1	No Talukas assigned to ESZ2
Gujarat	2	-	4
Maharashtra	11	6	23
Goa	-	-	-
Karnataka	15	1	22
Kerala	9	2	16
Tamil Nadu*	-	-	-

Districts / Talukas from Maharashtra falling under ESZ :

Districts	Talukas in ESZ1	Talukas in ESZ2	Talukas in ESZ3
Ahmednagar	Sangamner	Parner, Sangamner, Ahmadnagar	Akola
Dhule	-	Sakri	-
Kolhapur	Radhanagari, Gargoti, Shahuwadi, Panhala, Bavda	Kagal	Ajra, Chandgad, Gadhinglaj
Nandurbar	-	-	Navapur
Nashik	Nashik, Peint, Dindori, Kalvan, Chandvad, Sinnar	Surgana, Chandvad, Sinnar, Satana	Igatpuri
Pune	Ghod, Paud, Bhore, Wadgaon, Rajgurunagar, n.a. (1612)	Rajgurunagar, n.a. (1612), Shirur	Junnar, Sasvad
Raigarh	Mhasla, Pali, Poladpur, Roha, n.a. (1657), Pen, Mahad, n.a. (1634)	-	Mangaon, n.a. (1572)
Ratnagiri	Devrukh, Chiplun	Mandangarh, Dapoli, Guhagar	Khed
Sangli	Shirala	Atpadi, Kavathe Mahankal, Tasgaon, Vite	-
Satara	Medha, Patan, Mahabaleshwar, Wai	Koregaon, Karad, Shirwal, Phaltan, Satara	Vaduj, Dahivadi
Sindhudurg	Kankauli, Savantvadi, Kudal, Vaibhavwadi	-	-
Solapur	-	Malsiras, Sangole	-
Thane	Murbad, Mokhada, n.a. (1482), Jawhar	Bhiwandi	Shahapur

Taluka wise ESZ for Maharashtra



10. What are the Proposed guidelines and summary recommendations for sector-wise activities in ESZ?

Sector	ESZ1	ESZ2	ESZ3			
Across the Western Ghats	Genetically modified crops should not be allowed Phase out the use of plastic bags in shops, commercial establishments, tourist spots, on a priority basis (not more than 3 years)					
Land use	<p>For all settlements and built areas/ to be developed areas, certain types of areas would be no-go areas, including water courses, water bodies, special habitats, geological formations, biodiversity rich areas, and sacred groves Special Economic Zones should not be permitted New hill stations should not be allowed Public lands should not be converted to private lands;</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="533 596 1968 1262"> <tr> <td data-bbox="533 596 1093 1262"> <p>Change in land use not permitted from forest to non-forest uses or agricultural to non-agricultural, except agriculture to forest (or tree crops) except when extension of existing village settlement areas to accommodate increase in population of local residents.</p> <p>For existing built structures such as hotels, resorts, the tourism policy of the MOEF appropriately refined by WGEA, to be followed</p> <p>Road and other infrastructural expansion plans to be submitted for EIA scrutiny by the ULB / Local Planning Authority before execution of projects, especially assessing the cost-benefits considering ecological costs and public benefits.</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1093 596 1563 1262"> <p>Change in land use not permitted from forest to non-forest uses or agricultural to non-agricultural, except agriculture to forest (or tree crops) except when extension of existing village settlement areas to accommodate increase in population of local residents.</p> <p>For existing built structures such as hotels, resorts, the tourism policy of the MOEF appropriately refined by WGEA, to be followed</p> <p>Road and other infrastructural expansion plans to be submitted for EIA scrutiny by the ULB / Local Planning Authority before execution of projects, especially assessing the cost-benefits considering ecological costs and public benefits.</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1563 596 1968 1262"> <p>Changes from agricultural to non-agricultural land permitted, considering the following (and mitigating the impacts) in addition to the other socioeconomic and environmental parameters:</p> </td> </tr> </table>			<p>Change in land use not permitted from forest to non-forest uses or agricultural to non-agricultural, except agriculture to forest (or tree crops) except when extension of existing village settlement areas to accommodate increase in population of local residents.</p> <p>For existing built structures such as hotels, resorts, the tourism policy of the MOEF appropriately refined by WGEA, to be followed</p> <p>Road and other infrastructural expansion plans to be submitted for EIA scrutiny by the ULB / Local Planning Authority before execution of projects, especially assessing the cost-benefits considering ecological costs and public benefits.</p>	<p>Change in land use not permitted from forest to non-forest uses or agricultural to non-agricultural, except agriculture to forest (or tree crops) except when extension of existing village settlement areas to accommodate increase in population of local residents.</p> <p>For existing built structures such as hotels, resorts, the tourism policy of the MOEF appropriately refined by WGEA, to be followed</p> <p>Road and other infrastructural expansion plans to be submitted for EIA scrutiny by the ULB / Local Planning Authority before execution of projects, especially assessing the cost-benefits considering ecological costs and public benefits.</p>	<p>Changes from agricultural to non-agricultural land permitted, considering the following (and mitigating the impacts) in addition to the other socioeconomic and environmental parameters:</p>
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Building codes consisting of green technology and green building materials	A building code should be evolved by the WGEA which include inter-alia eco-friendly building material and construction methods, minimising the use of steel, cement and sand, providing water harvesting methods, non-conventional energy and waste treatment The application or detailing of the framework would be done by local authorities to suit local conditions..					

Sector	ESZ1	ESZ2	ESZ3
Area treatment/ plot development/ landscaping in the open areas of plots	<p>Certain recognized best practices of construction/development such as topsoil conservation, trees conservation etc. should be followed as per the guidelines of Green Building certifications of Eco Housing GRIHA or any other appropriate codes to be encouraged.</p> <p>Certain activities for example filling of marshes/ wetlands, introduction of alien invasive species are not permitted</p> <p>The area that may be paved is to be restricted; paving of ground areas may be done in such a manner that there is no change in the run-off / permeability of the plot overall before and after paving (if some area is paved, the recharge from other areas will have to be enhanced)</p>		
Waste treatment	<p>Local authorities should be made responsible to for developing regional systems for handling hazardous, toxic, biomedical wastes as well as recyclable materials</p>		
	<p>No hazardous or toxic waste processing units</p>	<p>No hazardous or toxic waste processing units</p>	<p>Recycling and waste processing units compliant with PCB regulations should be sited in ESZ3 areas (or outside the WG region) and should cater to nearby ESZ1 and 2 areas</p>
Wastewater management	<p>Mandatory for all layouts/ building developments though the choice of technology would vary with size of settlement;</p> <p>Should be such as to permit, reuse, recharge, recycling as locally appropriate and permit recovery of energy where possible</p>		
Water	<p>Decentralized water resources management plans at Local Self Government level</p> <p>Protect high altitude valley swamps and water bodies.</p> <p>Catchment area treatment plans of hydroelectric and major irrigation projects should be taken up to improve their life span.</p> <p>Improve river flows and water quality by scientific riparian management programmes involving community participation</p> <p>Water conservation measures should be adopted through suitable technology up gradation and public awareness programmes</p> <p>Inter-basin diversions of rivers in the Western Ghats should not be allowed</p>		
Agriculture	<p>Promote organic agricultural practices; discourage cultivation of annual crops on slopes exceeding 30%, where perennial crops should be promoted; introduce incentive payments for sequestration of carbon in soils, introduce incentive payments for maintenance of select traditional cultivars, encourage participatory breeding programmes to improve productivity of traditional cultivars; encourage precision agricultural practices, No GMOs</p>		
	<p>Phase out all use of chemical pesticides/</p>	<p>Phase out all use of chemical pesticides/</p>	<p>Phase out all use of chemical</p>

Sector	ESZ1	ESZ2	ESZ3
	<p>weedicides within five years</p> <p>Phase out, through a system of positive incentives, use of chemical fertilizers within five years</p>	<p>weedicides within eight years</p> <p>Phase out, through a system of positive incentives, use of chemical fertilizers within eight years</p>	<p>pesticides/ weedicides within ten years</p> <p>Phase out, through a system of positive incentives, use of chemical fertilizers within ten years</p>
Animal Husbandry	<p>Introduce incentive payments as ,conservation service charges` for maintenance of land races of livestock;</p> <p>Redeploy subsidies for chemical fertilizers towards maintenance of livestock and production of biogas and generation of organic manure;</p> <p>Restore community grasslands and forest grazing lands outside the Protected Areas.</p> <p>Breeds which can withstand adverse agro climatic conditions should be encouraged</p> <p>Application of weedicides in cash crop areas alongside the roads must be prohibited, since almost all plants coming under the weed category are rich cattle fodder.</p> <p>The unused land in tea estates should be used for cattle rearing and the organic manure thus produced used for tea plantation.</p>		
Fishery	<p>Strictly control use of dynamite and other explosives to kill fish; provide fish ladders at all reservoirs</p> <p>Introduce incentive payments as ,conservation service charges` for maintenance of indigenous fish species in tanks under control of Biodiversity Management Committees or Fishermen's co-operatives; monitor and control trade in aquarium fishes with the help of Biodiversity Management Committees</p>		
Forestry: Government lands	<p>Forest Rights Act to be implemented in its true spirit by reaching out to people to facilitate their claims, Community Forest Resource provisions under FRA to replace all current Joint Forest Management programmes,</p>		

Sector	ESZ1	ESZ2	ESZ3
	<p>5 years, by 2016</p> <p>Detailed plans for environmental and social rehabilitation of mines to be closed.</p> <p>Illegal mining to be stopped immediately</p>	<p>case by case basis</p> <p>Existing mining to adopt good practice mining and be under strict regulation and social audit</p> <p>Detailed plans for environmental and social rehabilitation of mines to be closed.</p> <p>Illegal mining to be stopped immediately</p>	<p>the plains & should be under strict regulation and social audit, subject to free prior informed consent of tribal and other communities and in recognition of tribal rights.</p> <p>Existing mining to adopt good practice mining and be under strict regulation and social audit</p> <p>Illegal mining to be stopped immediately</p>
Quarry and sand mining	<p>Where exists should be controlled effectively for environmental and social impacts immediately</p> <p>No new licenses to be given for quarry and sand mining</p>	<p>Upgradation possible/permitted subject to strict regulation and social audit</p>	<p>Existing and new quarry and sand mining should be under strict regulations and social audit and without affecting tribal rights</p>
Polluting Industry (Red /Orange)	<p>No new polluting (red and orange category) industries; for existing industries switch to zero pollution by 2016 and be subject to strict regulation and social audit</p>	<p>No new polluting (red and orange category) industries; for existing industries switch to zero pollution by 2016 and be subject to strict regulation and social audit</p>	<p>New industries may be set up under strict regulation and social audit.</p>
Non polluting (Green/ Blue) Industry	<p>With strict regulation and social audit.</p> <p>Local bioresource based industry should be promoted. All should be strictly regulated and be subject to social audit.</p>	<p>Promote Green/ Blue industries. Local bioresource based industry should be promoted. All should be strictly regulated and be subject to social audit.</p>	<p>Promote Green/ Blue industries. Local bioresource based industry should be promoted. All should be strictly regulated and be subject to social audit.</p>
Power/Energy	<p>Educate the energy consumer about the environmental and social impacts of energy production and the need for reducing ,luxury` demand</p> <p>Encourage demand side management; enhanced energy efficiency across sectors</p> <p>Launch ,smart` campaigns as key components of demand side management, focusing on smart grids, smart buildings, smart power, smart logistics and smart motors</p> <p>Promote decentralized electricity, use of solar power</p>		
	<p>Allow run of the river schemes with maximum height of 3 m permissible which would serve local energy needs of tribal/ local communities /</p>	<p>Small <i>bandharas</i> permissible for local and tribal community use / local self government use</p>	<p>Large Power plants are allowed subject to strict environmental regulations including</p>

Sector	ESZ1	ESZ2	ESZ3
	<p>plantation colonies subject to consent of gram sabha and all clearances from WGEA, SEA and DECs</p> <p>No forest clearance or stream diversion for new projects</p> <p>Run of the river schemes not allowed in first order or second order streams</p> <p>Promote small scale, micro and pico hydropower systems, that are people owned & managed and are off grid</p> <p>New small hydropower projects (10 MW and below) are permissible</p> <p>No new thermal power plants</p> <p>Strict environmental regulation of existing thermal power plants</p> <p>Existing thermal plants to actively promote alternate uses of fly ash - such as in road making in addition to the existing practices of manufacture of fly ash bricks</p> <p>No large scale wind power projects</p> <p>Promote biomass based /solar sources for decentralized energy needs.</p>	<p>No new dams above 15 m or new thermal plants permissible</p> <p>New hydro projects between 10- 25 MW (up to 10 m ht) permissible</p> <p>All project categories subject to very strict clearance and compliance conditions through SEA and DECs of WGEA</p> <p>Have run off the river hydropower projects but after cumulative impact study of the river basin is done</p> <p>Regulated wind power projects but after cumulative environmental impact assessment (CEIA)</p> <p>Zero pollution to be required of existing Thermal Power Plants</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. cumulative impact assessment studies 2. carrying capacity studies 3. minimum forest clearance (norms to be set by WGEA) 4. based on assessment of flows required for downstream needs including the ecological needs of the river <p>Existing Power plants subject to strict regulation and social audit.</p> <p>Zero pollution to be required for new thermal power plants.</p> <p>Wind projects only after CEIA</p> <p>For already existing dams reservoir operations to be rescheduled for allowing more water downstream</p>
	<p>No diversion of streams/ rivers allowed for any power projects and if already existing to be stopped immediately</p> <p>Catchment area treatment in a phased manner following watershed principles;</p> <p>continuous non-compliance of clearance conditions for three years would entail decommissioning of existing projects</p> <p>Dams and thermal projects that have crossed their viable life span (for dams the threshold is 30–50 years) to be decommissioned in phased manner</p> <p>All project categories to be jointly operated by LSGs and Power Boards with strict monitoring for compliance under DECs</p>		
Transport	No new railway lines and major roads, except where it is highly essential (as perhaps, in case	No new railway lines and major roads except when highly essential and subject	Essential new roads/ railways may be allowed subject to strict

Sector	ESZ1	ESZ2	ESZ3
	of Goa), and subject to EIA, strict regulation and social audit. Avoidance of new highways, expressways	to EIA, strict regulation and social audit. Upgradation of roads possible/ permitted subject to EIAs, strict regulation and social audit	regulation and social audit.
Tourism	Ecotourism policy of MoEF refined by the WGEA to promote minimal impact tourism in the region Strict regulation for waste management, traffic and water use	Strict regulation on basis of a Tourism master plan and social audit. Tourism Master Plan should be based on carrying capacity of area and after taking into account social and environmental costs.	Strict regulation and social audit Tourism Master Plan should be based on carrying capacity of area and after taking into account social and environmental costs
Education	Reconnect children and youth to local environment through education programmes focusing on local environmental issues, especially degradation of natural resources of land and water and air and water pollution. Tailor Environmental Education projects to serve as an instrument of participatory environmental monitoring involving local community members; connect such exercises to preparation of 'People's Biodiversity Registers' by the local Biodiversity Management Committees Students' 'River Clubs' should be encouraged in schools situated along the course of the respective river Teach agriculture in schools		
Science and Technology	Cumulative impact assessment for all new projects such as dams, mines, tourism, and housing, that impact upon water resources should be conducted and permission given only if they fall within the carrying capacity Focus research on perfecting green technology and make it affordable for common people. Environment flow assessments indicators should be worked out by Research institutions, NGOs along with local communities		
Information management	Build on the Western Ghats database of WGEEP to create an open, transparent, participatory system of environmental monitoring involving all citizens, in particular the student community Update and upgrade a hydrological data base of rivers and consolidate the ecological data base and information at river basin level		

11. Is there any specific recommendations for Mining, power production & polluting industries in Ratnagiri & Sindhudurg ?

Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts has been seriously impacted, both environmentally and socially by a number of mining, power projects, and polluting industries. The impacts are manifold; depletion and pollution of ground water, siltation of water bodies, increased flood frequencies, loss of fertile agricultural land, depletion of fisheries, deforestation, loss of unique biodiversity elements, pollution and so on. In view of this, the Panel has been asked to suggest an appropriate course of further development of mining, power production and polluting industries in these districts

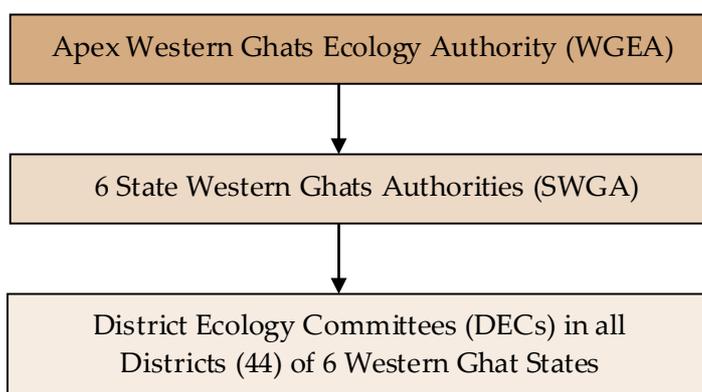
Only the eastern portions of these districts are covered by the Western Ghats for which WGEEP has completed assignment of Ecologically Sensitive Zones and guidelines for further development projects. For these Western Ghats regions of the district, the Panel recommends:

- i. An indefinite moratorium on new environmental clearances for mining in Ecologically Sensitive Zones 1 and 2
- ii. A phasing out of mining from ESZ 1 by 2016
- iii. Continuation of existing mining in ESZ 2 under strict regulation with an effective system of social audit
- iv. No new red and orange category industries, which would include coal based power plants, should be permitted to be established in ESZ 1 and 2
- v. The existing red and orange category industries should be asked to switch to zero pollution in ESZ 1 and 2 by 2016, and operated only under an effective system of social audit

WGEEP has not undertaken any extensive compilation of pertinent information and assignment of levels of ecological sensitivity to the plains and coastal portions of Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts falling outside the Western Ghats.

12. What is the Mechanism for Suggested Western Ghat Conservation / Regulation ?

In order to address the myriad environmental implications in the Western Ghats, which is proposed as an Ecologically Sensitive Area along with varying degree of ecological sensitivity as ESZ1, 2 and 3, it is proposed that an apex authority for the entire Western Ghats along with state Western Ghats authorities for each state and within them District Ecology Committees (DEC) be created to address the various environmental challenges of the Western Ghats.



The Western Ghats Ecology Authority (WGEA):

- WGEA should be a statutory authority appointed by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India under Section 3 of the Environment (Protection) Act 1986.
- Will function in networked fashion with Six constituent State Western Ghats Ecology Authorities, appointed jointly by the State Governments and the MoEF.
- WGEAs should interact closely with the State Biodiversity Boards and Pollution Control Boards, as well as State Planning Departments administering the Western Ghats Development Programmes funded through Five Year Plans by the Planning Commission.
- **WGEA District Ecology Committees -**
 - Should work in collaboration with the district level Zilla Parishad/ Zilla Panchayat Biodiversity Management Committees, as well as District Planning Committees.
 - The current High Level Monitoring Committees (HLMCs) appointed by MoEF for 'Ecological Sensitive Zones' will be replaced by WGEA's District Ecology Committees.
 - The district level Biodiversity Management Committees, which are statutory bodies established under the Biological Diversity Act may be asked to discharge the functions of WGEA District Ecology Committees by augmenting their membership by some experts appointed by MoEF & State WGEAs.
- WGEA should focus on promoting transparency, openness and participation in every way. An excellent tool for this could be the revival of the scheme of Paryavaran Vahinis, or committees of concerned citizens to serve as environmental watchdogs and undertake first hand monitoring of the environmental situation in the district as required.
- WGEA should vigorously pursue further development of the Western Ghat Spatial database. WGEA should encourage citizen involvement in continual development of the Western Ghats database.

- WGEA should lead a radical reform of the Environmental Impact Analysis (EIA) and Clearance process.
- To promote a more holistic perspective and organize a process of Cumulative Impact Analysis in place of the current project-by-project clearances.
- WGEA should strive to promote a participatory, bottom-up approach to conservation, sustainable development and ecorestoration of the Western Ghats.
- WGEA should take immediate steps to ensure establishment of Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) at all levels, namely, Gram Panchayats, Taluka Panchayats, Zilla Panchayats, as also Nagarpalikas and Mahanagarpalikas in all the Western Ghats districts. WGEA should ensure that BMCs are motivated through empowerment to levy 'collection charges' as provided in the Biological Diversity Act.
- WGEA should promote pro-active and sympathetic implementation of PESA (Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas Act) and of the provision of Community Forest Resources under the Forest Rights Act.
- Finally, WGEA should strive to make a transition from regulations and negative incentives to promote nature conservation-oriented activities to a system of use of positive incentives to encourage continued conservation-oriented action in the context of traditional practices such as sacred groves and to initiate other action in modern contexts.

Suggested Mechanism for Western Ghat Conservation / Regulation-

	Apex Western Ghats Ecology Authority (WGEA)	State Western Ghats Authority (SWG A)	District Ecology Committees (DECs)
Constitution	<p>MoEF in consultation with the state governments of the Western Ghat States.</p> <p>This notification under the EPA will be in addition to other environmental laws to deal with offenders in the Ecologically Sensitive Area of the Western Ghats</p>	<p>Central Government in consultation with the respective state governments and the apex Western Ghats Ecology Authority.</p>	<p>The State Authorities in consultation with the state Government and the WGEA which will be the scrutinizing and verifying body for any dispute regarding ecologically sensitive zones within its jurisdiction.</p>
Members *	<p>The Western Ghats Ecology Authority shall comprise 24 members</p> <p>The WGEA shall comprise discipline or domain experts, resource experts and include representation from the nodal ministries.</p>	<p>It shall comprise 11 members</p> <p>The State Ecology Authorities shall comprise of discipline or domain experts, resource experts and representation from nodal departments.</p>	<p>Shall comprise of discipline or domain experts, resource experts and representation from nodal departments.</p>
Role / function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Authority shall function in conformity with all environmental laws ○ Approve the master land use plan of the ESZ which shall be prepared by the state governments in consultation with the DEC. ○ Develop a Western Ghats-specific master plan for the conservation of biological diversity/ecosystem and promotion of sustainable development. ○ Lay down normative standards for regulating, managing and controlling activities that have adverse impact on the ecology and social fabric of the communities with respect to environmental decisions in the Western Ghats. ○ Promote, coordinate research and monitoring of activities that have impacts on the ecology of the Western Ghats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The deciding authority for every dispute on the Western Ghats relating to environment within its jurisdiction and that is brought before it through a prescribed process. ○ It may appoint an Environmental Ombudsman, in each district who may be the focal point between the Authority and the District and who shall head the District Ecology Committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Initiating planning agency at the district level for the Western Ghats Master Plan through a bottom up process ○ The scrutiny agency to assess the integration of other plans by other departments into the master plan at the district level. ○ First statutory body for scrutinizing and verifying any dispute, before it is brought to the state authority. ○ The DEC may also appoint Environment Awareness Volunteers whose primary task would be to raise awareness about the ecological importance of the Western Ghats and carry

	Apex Western Ghats Ecology Authority (WGEA)	State Western Ghats Authority (SWGA)	District Ecology Committees (DECs)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Follow a cumulative impact approach to projects that are permissible and shall ensure that the regional planning process sets an upper limit for number, size and nature of projects or activities in the given region. 		<p>out participatory monitoring among other things.</p>
Powers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Powers under Section 3(2) and other relevant provisions of the EPA ○ Jurisdiction over location of industry or other facilities or processes, land use planning and any other activity having adverse impact on the ESZ. ○ Final Authority for categorizing ESZ 1, 2 and 3 in consultation with the states & with an inclusive and participatory consultation process in prescribed time period (say six months). ○ Establish a transparent decision-making process. It shall also publish its final decision in the public domain. ○ Appellate authority for any decision taken by the state authorities provided if there are disputes between two states within the Western Ghats. ○ Revalidate accredited EIA Consultants for working in the Western. ○ To issue directions to the state government or agencies or authorities to prohibit, regulate or allow any activity that may have adverse impact on the Western Ghats and to comply with its orders. ○ To issue clarifications on any provisions in the notification. ○ To levy fines and other punitive measures as laid down in the Environment Protection Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To issue directions to any agency at the state level or authorities to prohibit, regulate or allow any activity that may have adverse impact on the Western Ghats within the state jurisdiction and ensure compliance with its orders. ○ Delegated powers under Section 3(2) and other relevant provisions of the EPA in order to discharge its functions effectively for the conservation and development of the Western Ghats in their specific jurisdiction. ○ To levy fines and other punitive measures as laid down in the Environment Protection Act and other environmental laws. ○ To call for any records, documents, or notes by any authority, agency within concerned state government as well as the central government in order to arrive at any decision. 	

	Apex Western Ghats Ecology Authority (WGEA)	State Western Ghats Authority (SWGA)	District Ecology Committees (DECs)
	and other environmental laws. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To call for any records, documents, or notes by any authority, agency within concerned state government as well as the central government in order to arrive at any decision. 		
Term of the members	5 years		
Financial Autonomy	Complete financial autonomy wherein the central government along with the concerned state governments shall pool in resources for the functioning of such authorities and Committees. Further, a portion of any pecuniary fine may be utilized for the functioning of the authority itself.		
Dispute resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person aggrieved by any activity or act in contravention of the provisions of the notification or which has an adverse impact on the ecology, environmental or social consequences on the ESZs of the Western Ghats as prescribed in the Schedule, may approach the concerned authority through the District Ecology Committee, State Authority or the apex WGEA as the case may be in a prescribed form. The concerned Authority or Committee shall respond within a period of 30 days and adjudicate the dispute within a prescribed period which may ordinarily be six months or earlier or in extended period for exceptional circumstances (by giving reasons thereof). 		

* Discipline or domain experts include experts from the discipline of science, economics, law, sociology and the like. Resource experts include experts in forestry, hydrology, soil science, agriculture, land use, ecology and the like.

▪ **Establishment of Western Ghats Conservation and Management Foundation**

1. The Central Government through the WGEA shall establish a Western Ghats Conservation and Management Foundation which shall be financially independent to support the various extension activities of the WGEA.
2. Such funds may be used to carry out further research on specific issues, field visits and assessments, obtaining experts' views and other materials necessary for arriving at sound environmental decisions.

• **Proposed Framework of the Western Ghat Ecology Authority**

1. Statement of Object and Rationale of the Authority
2. Preamble
3. Definitions
4. Constitution of WGE Authority
5. Term of office and conditions of service of members
6. Officers and employees of WGE Authority
7. Powers
8. Functions
9. Procedure to be regulated by the Authority
10. Grants and loans to the Authority and Constitution of Fund
11. Accounts and audit of the Authority
12. Annual report of the Authority
13. Annual report and audit report to be laid before parliament
14. Constitution of State Authority
15. Constitution of District Ecology Committee
16. Western Ghats Master Conservation and Management Plan
17. Alteration and modification of the ESZ categories
18. Establishment of Western Ghats Conservation and Management Foundation
19. Offences by Company
20. Immunity to Officers discharging duties in official capacity

13. What is the Next Course of Action?

- The WGEEP has submitted its report to MoEF in August 2011
- The WGEEP report is published on MoEF website on 23 May 2012.
- Stakeholders' comments/views are invited within 45 days on the following emails: amit.love@nic.in, sv.godavarthi@nic.in.
The comments/views may also be sent by fax/mail to MoEF

14. News

Make report on Western Ghats public'

Times of India, Mumbai, 20 May 2012

The Delhi high court has upheld the chief information commissioner's argument to make the Madhav Gadgil committee report on the Western Ghats public. Justice Vipin Sanghi, while dismissing a plea by the Union ministry of environment and forests (MoEF) not to make the report public, said the scientific, strategic and economic interests of the state cannot be at cross purposes with the requirement to protect the ecosystem in accordance with the Environment Protection Act a legislation framed to protect the larger public interest and for promotion of public good.

"Policies framed with the sole object of advancing the scientific and economic interests of the state, but in breach of the state's obligations under the environment act, would be vulnerable to challenge and may eventually not serve the purpose for which such a policy is framed," he said. A policy evolved in the largest public interest and public good can certainly not be against the strategic, scientific or economic interest of the state, he added. The MoEF had approached the court after CIC Shailesh Gandhi ruled that making the report public did not harm the economic and scientific interests of the country. Gandhi had directed the MoEF to upload the report on its website by May 10 and further ruled that it must publish all reports of commissions, special committees or panels within 30 days of receiving the same, unless it is felt that any part of such report would hurt the nation's economic, scientific or strategic interests.

Activist Sumaira Abdulali, whose plea to make the report public under the Right to Information Act was rejected by the MoEF and subsequently filed a PIL in the Bombay high court, welcomed the order. "The state always speaks of an inclusive policy but never practices it. It does everything to keep citizens out of the decision-making process," she said. The court observed that the consultative process, the involvement of civil-rights groups does not stop after the making of the report by the Western Ghats Ecology Experts Panel (WGEEP).

"After making the report, consultative and participatory process, should become even more interactive and intense. The policy should be formulated after due consideration of all viewpoints," it said. The additional solicitor-general, Indira Jaising, arguing why the report should not be made public, said the report was based on incomplete data. "Declaring the Western Ghats as an ecologically sensitive zone would have far-reaching implications on ongoing and proposed industrial activities in different states," she said.

Western Ghats report now in public domain

Snehal Rebello, Hindustan Times, Mumbai, 25 May 2012

Nearly nine months after the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP) submitted its report to the Centre, the union environment ministry finally uploaded the report on its website late on Wednesday night. The ministry has sought comments from the public within 45 days on the report that was submitted by the panel headed by ecologist Madhav Gadgil.

However, the ministry has added a disclaimer: "The Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel report has not been formally accepted by the ministry and that the report is still being analysed and considered by the ministry".

The Gadgil Committee report was submitted last August and was to be officially released in September. However, the event was deferred indefinitely. Earlier this month, the Central Information Commissioner directed the environment ministry to provide a summary of the report under the Right to Information Act to an applicant. The ministry then moved a plea in the Delhi high court against making the report public. On May 20, however, the court directed the ministry to upload the report on its website.

"A lot of time has been lost since the submission of the report. Now that it's in the public domain, the ministry should make the report available in regional languages so that locals have a say in the development of western ghats region," Gadgil said. "We just want a democratic process involving stakeholders to be followed before framing policies."

Maharashtra has rejected the report terming it impractical and has objected to the classification of 43 of its talukas under a zone where no development other than agriculture will be allowed.

Consider ecology expert panel's report on Western Ghats, says IUCN - K. S. Sudhi

The Hindu, 2 June 2012

The Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel's (WGEEP) report had a bearing on the World Heritage Committee's decision on heritage status for the Western Ghats, though the government is yet to accept the findings.

The Committee recently deferred the decision following a report of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). India has been asked to consider the WGEEP recommendations "on land use and controls on development" in the region. The Union Ministry of Environment recently released the report in the public domain with a caveat that it had not formally accepted the report.

The IUCN suggested that the authorities "review and refine the scope and composition of the current serial nomination to take into account the recommendations of the WGEEP, noting the panel was tasked with compiling scientific data and defining ecologically sensitive areas through consultation."

Less mention of ESZs

The agency noted that "the report tabled last year made a few recommendations on Ecologically Sensitive Zones as areas of high conservation value within the Ghats system." The "IUCN believes it is appropriate to consider the findings of the WGEEP report, noting it was specifically commissioned by the government of India and tasked with comprehensive data compilation and identifying ecologically sensitive areas through GIS and an extensive consultation processes," it said.

It proposed "refining" the boundaries of the serial sites further "to ensure the exclusion of disturbed areas such as artificial reservoirs, plantations, settlements, industry and agricultural lands; and to enhance the contiguity and buffer zones of the nomination, taking into account the recommendations" of the panel.

The nominated sites included 19 from Kerala, 10 from Karnataka, six from Tamil Nadu and four from Maharashtra.

A suggestion was made to "establish improved coordination and integration between component sites, particularly through the preparation and implementation of an overarching management plan or framework for the serial property as a whole and through the establishment of the proposed Western Ghats Natural Heritage Conservation Authority."

The report pointed out that human impact was evident across the landscape despite the "careful delineation of boundaries to exclude these wherever possible from the nominated property itself."

The agency noticed some instances of "encroachment, livestock grazing, fodder and fuel wood collection, illegal hunting and increasing interest in tourism-related activity" in some areas. The same time, V.B. Mathur, Dean of the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehra Dun, pointed out that the WGEEP primarily dealt

with the ecology of the Ghats areas outside the national parks and protected areas. The serial sites are either national parks or wildlife sanctuaries, which have an effective management mechanism in place. The Ministry had effectively implemented all the suggestions made by the IUCN earlier, he said.

Indigenous people

Stressing the need for respecting the existing "indigenous institutions," IUCN also noted that there were some 40 different Adivasi/indigenous peoples in several States of the Ghats region. The agency also stated that it was "made aware of continued significant concerns about the nomination and rights issues from sections of the indigenous local community." report stated that "it was important that governance mechanisms were not externally imposed but respect existing indigenous institutions for decision-making consistent with the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples."

Western Ghats panel report on windmills draws Maharashtra ire

Times of India, Pune, 10 June 2012

The state government has objected to the recommendations made by the Western Ghat ecology expert panel on setting up windmills in ecologically sensitive areas.

Speaking at the first stakeholders workshop of the Maharashtra state biodiversity board held at Bharati Vidyapeeth Insititute of Environment Education and Research, on Saturday, principal secretary (forest) Pravinsinh Pardeshi said, "We have objected to the recommendations made in Gadgil's report that windmills projects should undergo a comprehensive cumulative impact assessment before clearance. It is also recommended that a moratorium be placed on all wind energy farm proposals until comprehensive environmental impact assessment studies are conducted. It recommended that no windmills be allowed in ecologically sensitive zone 1 (regions of high sensitivity)."



Biodiversity of Western Ghats



Blue Mormon



Orchid



Indian Bison



Malabar Gliding Frog



White Bellied Blue Flycatcher



Red Pierrot



Glory Lily



Indian Giant Squirrel



Anjani



Moon Moth



Nilgiri Wood Pigeon



Tiger

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