NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY AUTHORITY

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 61st AUTHORITY MEETING

30th April 2021

(*In virtual mode*)

Proceedings of the 61stAuthority Meeting of the National Biodiversity Authority, held on 30th April 2021

The 61st Authority meeting of the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) was held on 30th April 2021 in 'virtual mode' under the Chairmanship of Dr.V.B.Mathur,Chairman,National Biodiversity Authority. The list of participants is placed as **Annexure-I**.

2. At the outset, Dr.V.B. Mathur, Chairperson, NBA welcomed all the Members for the meeting. He also welcomed the new Members *viz.* Dr. Anamika Gambhir, Scientist F, Department of Biotechnology; Dr. M.V. Ramanamurthy, Director, National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR), Ministry of Earth Sciences and Shri.Achalender Reddy, IFS (Retd.), Director, Centre for Innovations in Public Systems.

3. Thereafter, Shri. J. Justin Mohan, Secretary NBA presented the agenda items as under:

61.01 Confirmation of the Proceedings of the 59thAuthority meeting

The draft proceedings of the 59th Authority meeting of the National Biodiversity Authority held on 7th August, 2020 through virtual mode were confirmed by the Authority members.

Decision: The members confirmed the Proceedings of the 59th Authority meeting.

Action: NIL

61.02 Confirmation of the Proceedings of the 60th Authority meeting

The draft proceedings of the 60th Authority meeting of the National Biodiversity Authority held on 28th August, 2020 through virtual mode were confirmed by the Authority members.

Decision: The members confirmed the Proceedings of the 60th Authority meeting.

Action: NIL

61.03 Action Taken Report of the 56th – 60th Authority Meetings

The Secretary, NBA apprised the members about the actions taken and actions that are in progress on the decisions taken in the 56th -60th Authority Meetings. .

Dr. S. Kerketta apprised the members regarding Agenda item no. 56.03 of the 56th Authority meeting, Agenda item no. 57.02 of the 57th Authority meeting, Agenda item no.58.02 of the 58th Authority meeting and Agenda item no.59.02 of the 59th Authority meeting and Agenda item no. 60.02 of the 60th Authority meeting related to the draft amendments to the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 and Biological Diversity Rules, 2004. He mentioned that after due deliberations and consultations, final approval from the Hon'ble Minister of the MoEF&CC on the amendments to the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 and Biological Diversity Rules, 2004 is awaited.

Secretary, NBA discussed Agenda item No. 56.10 taken up during the 56th Authority meeting on the allotment of building/land for housing the office of NBA in Chennai and establishment of an International Biodiversity Park. The Chairman, NBA informed that the Government of Tamil Nadu vide letter no. 6313/FR.11/2020-1 dated 19.01.2021 has accorded consent to allocate the existing office building along with 1 ha of land at Nanmangalam Reserve Forests vide its letter dated 19.01.2021. MoEF&CC has released Rs. 1 crore as an advance amount to the transferred to the Government of Tamil Nadu for the above purpose vide Sanction Order dated 30.03.2021. Meanwhile, NBA has filed an online application seeking clearance under the Forest Conservation Act, 1980. Dr. S. Kerketta apprised the members that action is being taken to release the balance amount to be transferred to the Government of Tamil Nadu. He further informed that certain clarifications have been requested by the Integrated Finance Division which are being processed.

Decision: Members noted the action taken on the decisions and appreciated the efforts taken by NBA for procurement of both building and land in Chennai on a permanent basis.

Action: NIL

61.04: ABS applications dealt by the Secretariat

Secretary, NBA informed that the NBA Secretariat has cleared 1483 applications during FY 2020-21. He informed that 411 Form I applications, 11 Form I applications, 1050 Form III applications and 11 Form IV applications were cleared during FY 2020-21 which are the highest number of clearances till date. He informed that this is the highest number of agreements executed in a financial year till date and almost all the pendencies in NBA have now been cleared. He also informed that the as per the decision of the Authority based on the recommendation of the Expert Committee headed by Shri. A.K.Goyal, an office order was issued based on which only files that required expert opinion were alone referred to the Expert Committee on ABS. During the discussion, it was decided that only applications which have been fully processed by NBA Secretariat should be placed before Authority for approval.

Decision: The applications cleared and executed by NBA were noted by the Authority. It was decided that henceforth only applications fully processed by NBA should be placed before Authority. Members also cautioned that the above procedure of bringing to the notice of Authority after execution of agreement may not be continued in future as it deviates from the laid down procedure. To avoid delays in disposal of Applications, on-line meetings of Authority should be held regularly as mentioned under Rule-10 of BD Rules 2004. It says that Authority should meet atleast 4 times in a year normally after a period of every 3 months.

Action: Secretary

61.05: Proceedings of the 60th meeting of the Expert Committee on Access and Benefit Sharing (EC on ABS) held on 3rd November 2020

Secretary, NBA informed that the 60th meeting of the Expert Committee on Access and Benefit Sharing (EC on ABS) was held on 3rd November 2020 in virtual mode. A total of 51 applications and one pertaining to a generic issue were placed before the EC for examination. The applications that were recommended for approval by the EC on ABS are being cleared by NBA Secretariat by sending draft agreements to the applicant for execution. After deliberations, it was decided that only those applications which have been recommended by EC on ABS, alone

should be placed before the Authority for approval and wherever clarifications have been sought by the EC on ABS from the applicants or SBBs etc., such applications should not be placed before the Authority till these are formally recommended by EC on ABS.

Decision: a. The Authority members decided that applications that have been recommended for approval by the Expert Committee on Access and Benefit Sharing should alone be placed before the Authority.

b. The Authority approved the recommendation of the 60th EC on ABS. Those applications on which clarification has been sought from applicants were deferred for approval till they are finally recommended for approval by the EC on ABS.

Action: NBA Secretariat

61.06: Proceedings of the 61st meeting of the Expert Committee on Access and Benefit Sharing (EC on ABS) held on 18th March 2021

Secretary, NBA informed that the 61st meeting of the Expert Committee on Access and Benefit Sharing (EC on ABS) was held on 18.03.2021 in virtual mode. A total of 43 applications were placed before the EC for examination. The applications that were recommended for approval by the EC on ABS were further processed by NBA Secretariat by sending draft agreements to the applicant for execution. After deliberations, it was decided that only those applications which have been recommended by EC on ABS, alone should be placed before the Authority with essential details in a prescribed format for approval and wherever clarifications have been sought by the EC on ABS from the applicants, such applications should not be placed before the Authority till these are formally recommended by EC on ABS.

Decision: a. The Authority members decided that applications that have been recommended for approval by the Expert Committee on Access and Benefit Sharing should alone be placed before the Authority.

b. The Authority approved the recommendation of the 61st EC on ABS. Those applications on which clarification has been sought from applicants were deferred for approval till they are finally recommended for approval by the EC on ABS.

Action: NBA Secretariat

61.07. Guidelines for financial assistance to SBBs /UTBCs

Secretary, NBA informed that under the provisions of the BD Act, 2002, each local body shall constitute a Biodiversity Management Committee (BMC) within its area for the purpose of promoting conservation, sustainable use and documentation of biological diversity in the form of People's Biodiversity Registers (PBR). NBA has been extending financial grant for formation of BMCs and preparation of PBRs following the "Guidelines for operationalization of BMCs" to help facilitate informed activities at State and local levels in establishing the BMCs as per Section 41 and Rule 22 of the BD Act (2002) and Rules (2004).

NBA supports the State Biodiversity Boards (SBBs) by way of Grant-in-Aid (GIA) from time to time based on proposals received from the states seeking financial assistance towards various components, of which formation of BMCs and preparation of PBRs are given top priority. SBBs also utilize other source of funds in undertaking these activities.

The Principal Bench of Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (NGT) in its latest Order dated 16.12.2020, (in the matter of O.A.347 of 2016, Chandra Bhal Singh Vs UoI and Others) has directed MoEFCC and NBA to ensure compliance with 100% constitution of BMCs and preparation of PBRs by 30th June 2021. Following the NGT order, the SBBs and UTBCs have been able to constitute **2,73,451** BMCs and prepare **2,48, 156** PBRs across India as on 31st March, 2021.

Presently **5** UTBCs (Andaman & Nicobar, Lakshadweep, J & K, Ladakh and Chandigarh) have started functioning and they have started submitting proposals to NBA seeking financial assistance. Secretary, NBA presented and explained the currents components for which financial assistance for strengthening the office of the Member Secretaries and undertaking mandatory works in implementing the Biological Diversity Act is provided by NBA to the different SBBs and UTs. He further mentioned that the financial support is subject to the proposals received from the SBBs/ UTBCs during each financial year based on their requirements.

Secretary, NBA further explained that in the present context, financial assistance is required for the capacity building of BMCs instead of their formation. He informed the members that in compliance to the aforesaid court order, a large number of PBRs have been

prepared on a fasttrack mode and these require quality improvements. In view of this, he placed a revised proposal of the allocation of the components. Secretary, NBA explained that the primary focus of the SBBs and UTBCs are on strengthening the BMCs and making them functional. He further explained that this will help in contributing to the documentation of quality PBRs and implementation of the ABS mechanism. Secretary, NBA presented the revised proposal to the Authority members. During deliberations, members suggested to increase the assistance for outsourced staff and proportionately reducing the level of assistance under components for raising public awareness and translation of materials. Accordingly, the maximum grant limit for SBBs for a financial year was fixed as below :-

Table 1: Maximum grant limit for SBB/UTBC for a financial year

S.No.	**Components**	**Maximum grant limit (Per year/SBB or UTBC) (Rs.)**
1.	Preparation/ Quality improvement of PBRs/ e-PBR	10,00,000
2.	Raising public awareness, developing communication materials.	2,00,000
3.	Outsourced staff	13,50,000/-
4.	Strengthening and capacity building of BMCs	10,00,000/-
5.	Translation of Materials, Printing & Dissemination	4,00,000/-
6.	Thematic Expert Committee	10,00,000/-
7.	"Peer to Peer" learning & exchange visits	8,00,000/-
8.	Developing of website & maintenance	3,00,000/-

Decision: The Authority decided that the allocation of funds for various components of the financial assistance to SBBs/UTs will be as per details given in Table 1.

Action: Secretariat

61.08: Ratification of the Grants released during 2020-21

Secretary, NBA explained the members that MoEF&CC has allocated funds for the year 2019-20 and 2020-21 under the special components of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Sub plans to support the formation of BMC and preparation of PBRs in SC/ST dominated areas

of the States. He explained that the NBA has already supported 5 States namely, Assam (Rs. 11.40 lakhs), Arunachal Pradesh (Rs. 6.90 lakhs), Mizoram (Rs. 8 lakhs), Tripura (Rs. 3 lakhs) and Nagaland (Rs. 5.75 lakhs) under the Special component of ST Sub Plan. He also informed that NBA has supported Rajasthan (Rs. 10 lakhs), Punjab (Rs. 7.50 lakhs), Haryana (Rs. 8.40 lakhs), under the Special component of SC Sub plan. Secretary, NBA mentioned that Lakshwadeep UTBC (Rs. 13.80 lakhs) and Ladakh UTBDC (Rs. 11.40 lakhs) were given financial assistance during the financial year 2020-21 following the existing guidelines followed for SBBs.

Decision: a. The Authority members appreciated and noted the financial assistance given by NBA to the SBBs under the Special component of SC and ST sub plan.
b. The Authority members ratified the grants released by NBA to the SBBs and the UTBCs.

Action: NIL

61.09: Approval of the Draft Annual report of NBA for the year 2019-20

The Draft Annual Report on the activities of NBA for the year 2019-20 along with the annual account statement and Certification of Audit of Annual Accounts were placed for consideration. Members opined that after the word Member, the words 'cum Chairman' may be added to convey the message properly on page 72.

Decision: The Authority members approved the draft Annual report of NBA for the year 2019-20 with a slight modification on page 72.

Action: Secretariat

61.10: NBA-UNDP Biodiversity Samrakshan Internship Program (BSIP)-2021-22

The National Biodiversity Authority and United Nations Development Program will be jointly launching the third cycle of the 'Biodiversity Samrakshan Internship Program' during the celebration of the International Day for Biological Diversity on 22nd May 2021. Chairperson, NBA explained the objective of this program i.e.to attract dynamic and creative youngsters, who are willing to learn about natural resource management and biodiversity conservation and to engage them in the activities related to biodiversity conservation. He further explained that the

interns are selected based on an All-India level Test followed by an interview. Chairperson, NBA and Dr. Kerketta appreciated the quality of interns who were selected in the previous cycle and mentioned that they were proactive and were completely delivering the tasks assigned.

Chairperson, NBA mentioned that presently, a sum of Rs. 15,000/- per month is been given to the BSIP interns. However, this amount is inadequate especially in case of interns who have to support their accommodation. He mentioned that it is proposed to raise the stipend from Rs. 15,000/- to Rs. 20,000/- per month and to engage 25 interns for a 12-month period beginning from 1.1.2022. A provision to support limited work-related travel by the interns has also now been included. Dr. Kerkektta, MoEF&CC suggested that the stipend can be increased to Rs. 22,500/- per month by including an item for HRA for Rs. 2,500/-. This proposal was discussed in the meeting and agreed the proposal of Dr. Kerketta by the Authority.

Decision: a. The Authority members appreciated the launching of the third cycle of the 'Biodiversity Samrakshan Internship Program' for a period of 1 year from 1st January, 2022 to 31st December, 2022.

b. The Authority members decided that the stipend of the interns would be Rs 22,500 per month inclusive of HRA.

Action: NBA, Secretary

61.11: Initiation of India Biodiversity Awards 2022

The India Biodiversity Awards (IBA) is an initiative to recognize, encourage and honour the exemplary efforts of individuals and institutions, which contribute to and serve as an inspiration for biodiversity conservation, sustainable use of biological resources and fair and equitable sharing of benefits. Chairperson, NBA mentioned that NBA had received directions from MoEF&CC vide letter dated 12th May 2016 to initiate process for institutionalizing the IBA. Further, the NBA has sent a communication to MoEF&CC to rationalize the IBA as per the suggestion made by the Central Awards Support Unit (CASU), Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. He further mentioned that it is proposed to launch the India Biodiversity Awards, 2022-23 during the celebration of International Day for Biological Diversity on 22nd May 2021. Members were informed that presently, the awards are given under 5 categories and

it was decided to rationalize the awards under 4 categories. Chairman also placed the list of awardees selected by the Jury for the India Biodiversity Awards 2021.

Members deliberated on the rationalization that was proposed and suggested that the Category 1 "Conservation and Sustainable use of Natural Resources" should be changed to "Conservation and Sustainable use of Biological Resources" as the term Natural Resources may cover non-biological resources, which does not come under the ambit of Biological Diversity Act, 2002.

Accordingly, the following rationalization was approved by the Authority.

Sl. No.	Name of the Category	Entity	Value of the Award	Purpose of Award
1.	Conservation and Sustainable use of Biological Resources	Individuals/ Community Institutions/ Corporates (both public and private)	5 Lakhs Plus 2 Certificate of Appreciation of Rs 1 Lakh each.	Recognize Individuals and Institutions (including public and private corporates)
2.	Best Biodiversity Management Committee	Statutory Institutions under BDA 2002	5 Lakhs Plus 2 Certificate of Appreciation of Rs 1 Lakh each.	Recognize and Improve competition among the BMCs to perform
3.	Incentivising Access and Benefit Sharing	Body Corporate Practicing Complete Cycle of ABS Process	5 Lakhs Plus 2 Certificate of Appreciation of Rs 1 Lakh each.	Showcase best ABS process adopted by an body corporate to comply with BDA 2002 and Rules 2004 while conserving natural resources.
4.	Best Peoples' Biodiversity Register	Innovations Used in Documenting PBRs by BMCs	5 Lakhs Plus 2 Certificate of Appreciation of Rs 1 Lakh each.	Encourage enhance the quality of PBRs documentation in the country.

Decision: The members approved the selection of awardees by the Jury and to launch of India Biodiversity Awards (IBA) 2022-23 during the celebration of International Day for Biological Diversity on 22nd May 2021 and to rationalize the Awards subject to the change in the rationalization of Category 1 to "Conservation and Sustainable use of Biological Resources"

Action: Secretary, NBA

61.12: New Pension Scheme - Approval of NBA employer's contribution of 14% as for Central Government employees.

Secretary, NBA informed that 'Regulation 5' of Recruitment Regulations of NBA staff prescribes that the service conditions of employees of NBA shall be as applicable to Central Government employees. Accordingly, the contributions to New Pension Scheme (NPS) to employees who have been appointed on or after 1-1-2004 were being made, initially @ 10% in line with the rates applicable to Central Government employees.

Subsequently, the Govt. of India revised the employer's contribution to 14% with effect from April 2019 for the Central Government employees. Secretary, NBA mentioned that consequently, NBA has also adopted the order and revised the employer's contribution as 14%. Secretary, NBA mentioned that the MoEF&CC has now advised NBA to put '*on hold*' the revision of NPS contribution to 14% until further orders, based on Department of Expenditure's direction stating that the revision is applicable only to the Central Government employees. Accordingly, NBA has reduced the subscription rate to 10% from October, 2020.

He mentioned that so far, NBA has not received further orders either from the DOE or from the MoEF&CC on restoration of NPS contribution @ 14% . Since the NPS contributions @ 14% were put 'on hold' based on the DOE's executive direction, which is contrary to the statutory provisions of Recruitment Regulations, NBA intends to inform the MoEF&CC to concur with the proposal of NBA to restore the NPS contribution @ 14% to NBA employees as applicable to Central Government employees.

Dr. Kerketta requested for clarification on the recruitment of the permanent staff at NBA to which Secretary, NBA mentioned that the permanent staffs have been recruited based on the recruitment rules of NBA and they are not recruited through UPSC. Dr. Kerketta mentioned that the proposal for the restoration of NPS contribution @ 14% to NBA employees as applicable to Central Government employees may be sent to the MoEF&CC for taking further necessary action.

Decision: The proposal for the restoration of NPS contribution @ 14% to NBA employees as applicable to Central Government employees was endorsed by the Authority with the advisory that it should be sent to the MoEF&CC for further action.

Action: NBA, Secretary

61.13: To ratify the revision of Guidelines for Young Professionals and Consultants.

The "Revised Guidelines for Engagement of Consultants, Young Professionals and Interns" was placed in the 55th Authority Meeting held virtually on 12th March 2020 (Agenda no.55:16). The approval for the agenda was recorded in the Proceedings of the 56th Authority Meeting held virtually on 23rd& 30th June 2020 (Agenda no.56.11.01). However, based on the powers vested with the Chairperson, certain modifications were done in the guidelines for engagement of Young Professionals based on the approval by Chairperson/NBA. These modifications were considered necessary to expand the scope of educational qualifications to make them more inclusive in nature and to add one more category of YP (IT).

The members deliberated that qualification for Young Professional (Scientific) may be modified as Bachelors in Biotechnology instead of Bachelor of Engineering (Biotechnology) as it would broaden the scope.

Chairman, NBA explained that in the engagement process of Young Professionals, NBA could not get sufficient number of applications in the category of IT/Computer Science. He mentioned that even among the few applications received, the two shortlisted candidates did not accept the offer citing personal reasons. He explained that as NBA needs to strengthen the IT team, it is proposed to engage a few persons through consultancy mode. As the existing guidelines do not have this category, it is proposed to revise the existing guidelines to include the IT stream. The revised guideline for the IT stream was placed before the Authority. The members opined that a Masters in Artificial Intelligence may also be added in the list of educational qualifications.

Decision: a. The qualification "Bachelor of Engineering (Biotechnology) for Young Professional (Scientific) may be changed to Bachelors in Biotechnology.

b. The Authority members decided to also add Masters in Artificial Intelligence in the qualification for IT consultant.

Action: Secretary, NBA

61.14 Ratification of decisions on Form-B applications

Under agenda item 32.06 of 32nd Authority meeting, it was decided as follows:

a) *The Chairman, NBA is authorized to accord approval or otherwise for Form- B applications, without referring to the SBB and the EC on ABS.*
b) *The approval or otherwise on the applications accorded shall be placed in the subsequent authority meetings for ratification*.

Secretary, NBA mentioned that the Chairperson, NBA has granted approval for **25 Form-B** applications and was ratified by the members.

Decision: The Authority considered and ratified the decisions taken on the 25 Form B applications.

Action: NIL

61.15 Details of Form-C applications received by the NBA

The Authority in its 37th meeting held in March 2016 under agenda item 37.14.02, decided that the Indian researchers / scientists should provide prior intimation to the NBA in the prescribed format viz., Form-C for deposition of microorganisms in repositories outside the country for claim of novel species for publication in journals. However, if any non-Indian person/entity intends to access the deposited Indian biological resource from the foreign repository, he/she should obtain the prior approval of NBA as per Section 3 of the BD Act, 2002. NBA has received 213 such intimations since March 2016 – March 2021 and the same have been reported to the Authority from time to time. Since June 2020, the Secretariat has received **nine** Form-C applications.

Decision: The information submitted in this regard was noted.

Action: NIL

61.16: Ratification of the applications for access to Red Sanders wood approved by the Chairperson, NBA

The applications seeking approval for accessing the Red Sanders wood were scrutinized as per the procedure approved by the Authority in its 32nd (32.07) & 35th Authority (35.03 & 35.19.01). In the 32nd Authority meeting (32.07), the Authority authorized the Chairman, NBA to accord approval to such applications and also directed the NBA Secretariat to place such approvals in the subsequent Authority meeting for ratification. Accordingly, the Chairperson, NBA approved six applications and closed two applications and these were placed before the Authority for ratification.

Members observed that if the applicant for Red Sanders is a section 7 entity. EC on ABS may be requested to explain as to why it has recommended that Foreign Partner to apply under form-1. Generally, such applications should be handled by the SBBs as section 7 entities who accessed Red Sanders through auction approached SBBs in the past and paid amount of benefit sharing to SBBs and not to NBA. NBA Secretariat may clarify this statutory point in next meeting.

Decision: The members ratified the approval of the six Red Sanders applications.

Action: NIL

61.17 Allocated fund to NBA by MoEF&CC for the year 2020 – 21

Secretary, NBA informed that the approved budget estimate of Rs.23.00 Crs has been reduced to 10.80 Crs due to pandemic COVID – 19, which was communicated to NBA by MoEF&CC during October, 2020. He mentioned that 40% of approved budget was released under the head GIA – General and hence, wages / remuneration component of Outsourcing / consultants / YPs has been booked under the head GIA – Salary from the month of November, 2020 onwards due to paucity of funds. As directed by CAG, the expenditure other than regular employees has to be incurred under the head GIA – General only. The utilization of fund under GIA – Salary towards wages / remuneration components as one time measure considering the

COVID -19 pandemic and the paucity of funds had been placed before the Authority for ratification.

Further Secretary, NBA mentioned that an amount of Rs.1.70 Crs has been transferred from National Biodiversity Fund A/c. to NBF – Admn. A/c. as per Rule 20 (9) of Biological Diversity Rules for the purpose of disbursing committed expenditure for the year 2020 – 21 due to inadequate fund received under GIA – General Budget head of NBA.

Decision: The members ratified the allocation of fund given by MoEF&CC to NBA.

Action: NIL

61.18. Items for Information

61.18.1: Fast track approval to Indian Oil Corporation for use of Microorganism to tackle major Oil spill in the coast of Mauritius in Indian Ocean.

Secretary, NA informed that an application was filed by Indian Oil Corporation Limited to access 1 kg of 8 different micro-organisms from the soil samples from hydrocarbon contaminated sites of the Indian Oil R &D Centre, Haryana for multiplication and transfer of these microorganisms, based on the request of Mauritius Government for bioremediation purpose in regard with the major oil spill that recently took place in the coast of Mauritius in Indian Ocean. The Joint Secretary to the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas vide letter dated 17.08.2020, had requested NBA to approve the access expeditiously. Accordingly, NBA approved the application on 17.08.2020, considering the urgency for humanitarian assistance to deal with environmental crisis for the purpose of bio-remediation, subject to execution of the agreement in due course.

Decision: The information submitted in this regard was noted.

Action: NIL

61.18.2: Fast track approvals issued for COVID-19 research for M/s. Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd & M/s.Tata Chemicals Ltd.

Secretary, NBA informed that due to the COVID-19 outbreak, NBA issued a circular dated 3rd April 2021 for fast tracking of approvals for COVID-19 research. Authority has decided to process the applications received by NBA for Covid-19 research and commercial purposes, which will be completed in all respects within 5 (five) working days as there is an urgent need to accelerate the development of diagnostics, vaccines, novel therapeutics and re-purposing of drugs for this novel coronavirus.

Accordingly, NBA had received three Form-I applications (App. No. 4277, 4390) from Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd and Tata chemicals Ltd. (Appl. No. 4110) for access to biological resources for commercial and research purposes related to Covid-19. Therefore, the three applications have been cleared on 19.10.2020, 18.12.2020 and 21.12.2020 out of which, only M/s. TATA Chemical Ltd executed agreement with NBA on 15.01.2021.

Decision: The information submitted in this regard was noted.

Action: NIL

61.18.3: Distribution of Benefit sharing amount to beneficiaries/ BMCs / SBBs

NBA has received a sum of Rs. 102 Crores as ABS from different applications filed under Form-I, Form-II, Form-III and Form-IV. Accordingly, NBA has shared Rs. 55.58 Crores to 20 different SBBs/UTBCs as ABS. Remaining 42.00 Crores is the committed expenditure to be released to Andhra Pradesh. A sum of Rs. 3.77 Crores has been allotted for undertaking research activities on Red Sanders with national Institutes like IWST, IFGTB & IICB-CSIR. Thus the total amount accrued as benefit sharing has been distributed to the respective States for disbursement to the benefit claimers.

Decision: The information submitted in this regard was noted.

Action: NIL

61.18.4: To consider the activities carried out through an Expert Committee on OECMs

Secretary, NBA informed that the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Government of India organized a meeting on 17th January 2020 to discuss the potential of recognizing Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) in achieving the global and national targets. A small group was constituted by the MoEF&CC on 8th June 2020 to develop Guidelines for identifying OECMs in India. The Criteria and Guidelines for Identifying OECMs in India were submitted to the MoEF&CC on 30th September 2020. In the report, four general criteria for the identification of potential conservation areas/OECMs under the 12 broad categories of OECMs in India were suggested.

To accelerate the identification, mapping and reporting of OECMs to the UNEP-WCMC database on OECMs, a Working Group was constituted on 5th October 2020 under the Chairmanship of Dr.V.B.Mathur, Chairperson, National Biodiversity Authority (OM no. CSC12017/23/2019-CS-III).

The Working Group convened a meeting on 15th October 2020 and the Chairperson requested the members to screen the potential areas on a case-by-case basis. In order to fulfil the tasks under the ToRs in a timely manner, a Sub-working Group was constituted for the purpose of identifying and reporting areas that could be considered as designated OECMs. The Sub-working Group on OECMs convened a meeting on 16th November 2020 to discuss the potential engagement of different agencies supporting the NBA in identifying and mapping OECMs in India under the 12 categories.

As a step forward, a reporting template was prepared as per the World Database on OECMs manual to document potential OECMs under each category and leading agencies were requested to screen and populate examples of potential OECMs in the reporting template. As of 22nd December 2020, 39 potential OECMs have been identified under the 12 categories, out of which information for 27 cases have been submitted and consent to share data with WDPA have been obtained for 21 cases. The second meeting of the committee held on 24th December 2020 identified 20 potential OECM sites which were also endorsed by the members. It was also decided that NBA would submit the report to MoEFCC within the deadline of 31st December 2020.

Accordingly, NBA had submitted the first 20 sets of potential OECMs of India to the Ministry for approval on 28th December 2020 as part of achievement under Aichi Biodiversity Target 11.

Decision: The information submitted in this regard was noted.

Action: NIL

61.18.5: Development of e-PBR for SBBs and Public

As per section 41 of the BD Act, the mandate of BMCs is to prepare People's Biodiversity Registers (PBRs) to document comprehensive information on local biological resources and associated knowledge. Towards this, NBA and SBBs have made various initiatives / steps including through projects for preparation of PBRs, as a result 248131 PBRs have been documented in 28 States and 2 UTs.

In this context, the eighth and ninth review meetings were held on 17th August 2020 and 8th October 2020 to discuss the progress of the development on e-PBR application awarded to NIC, Chennai and Trivandrum. The e-PBR software called BIOMIS (Biodiversity Management Information System) is being developed by NIC. The development activities are being reported through monthly reports to NBA for further improvements. Tripura, Tamil Nadu and Kerala SBBs have started entering their data into the e-PBR platform and have provided their inputs and feed backs to the NIC. The NIC team is still working on the software for further betterment and a wider documentation of the enriched biodiversity of our country.

Decision: The information submitted in this regard was noted.

Action: NIL

61.18.6: Approved budget estimate for the year 2021 – 22

Secretary, NBA informed that the Budget Estimate for the year 2021 - 22 for National Biodiversity Authority has been prepared and submitted for sanction to Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. Now the Ministry has accorded sanction to the tune of Rs.19.50 crores under Grants in Aid for NBA for the financial year 2021 - 22. This comprises of Rs.3.00

crores under Grants-in-Aid - Salaries and Rs. 16.00 crores under Grants-in-Aid - General. In addition, an amount of Rs.0.50 Cr has been sanctioned under GIA - Capital. As per the provisions contained in the Biological Diversity Rules,2004 under Clause 12(x) General Functions of the Authority, the Annual Budget Estimate has been prepared with headwise allocation of funds both for GIA-Salaries and GIA- General as approved by the Ministry for the financial year 2021 – 22.

(i) GIA – Salary	–	Rs.3.00 Cr
(ii) GIA – Regular	-	Rs.10.00 Cr
(iii)GIA – Strengthening of SBBs	-	Rs.4.00 Cr
(iv)GIA – Preparation of PBRs	-	Rs.2.00 Cr
(v) GIA – Capital	-	Rs.0.50 Cr

The NBA will also be requesting the MoEF&CC to allocate the balance amount of Rs. 11.60 crores required to make payment to Government of Tamil Nadu for acquiring the office building and 1 ha of land in Nanmangalam Reserve Forest complex for permanently locating NBA

Decision: Authority endorsed the Annual Accounts for the budget for the year 2021-22

Action: NIL

61.18.7: Certification Audit by the C & AG for the year 2019 - 20

Certification Audit of the National Biodiversity Authority for the period 2019 - 20 has been conducted by the Office of Comptroller and Auditor General of India (Scientific Depts.) during August 2020. The Audit report dated 3/3/2021 has been received and the same placed before the authority. The response of NBA for each para was placed for information before the Authority.

Decision: The information submitted in this regard was noted.

Action: NIL

61.18.8: Achievements of ABS Applications

Secretary, NBA informed that NBA received 5073 applications in various forms till date and cleared 4021 applications by sending model agreements to the applicant. Of these, 2436 Agreements have been executed and 839 applications have been closed. Secretary, NBA

mentioned that 1585 model agreements sent by NBA were pending with the applicants and 162 applications are under scrutiny at NBA. He also mentioned that NBA has also distributed the amount of Benefit Sharing of Rs.56.29 Cr to different BMCs all over India and Rs.11.28Cr has been realized during the FY 2020-21.

Secretary, NBA informed that during FY 2020-21, 1501 applications were cleared by NBA Secretariat out of which 407 were Form I applications, 10 Form II applications, 1049 Form III applications, 11 Form IV applications and 24 Form B applications. This was the highest number of clearances in a financial year. Similarly, NBA Secretariat has also executed 1051 agreements with applicants which included 75 Form I applications, 8 Form II applications, 946 Form III applications and 22 Form B applications which happens to be the highest number of agreements executed in a financial year. Members appreciated the work done by the NBA Secretariat amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Decision: The information submitted in this regard was noted.

Action: NIL

61.18.9: Update on the Proposed Draft Amendments to the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 and Biological Diversity Rules, 2004

Secretary, NBA updated and elaborated the course of action that was taken on the Proposed Draft Amendments to the Biological Diversity Act, 2002. He informed that the Ministry is pursuing this matter with the help of a newly constituted Working Group. Dr. Kerketta appraised and updated the members on the developments on the proposed draft amendments to the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 and Biological Diversity Rules, 2004. He mentioned that after due deliberations and consultation, final approval from the Hon'ble Minister of the MoEF&CC on the amendments to the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 and Biological Diversity Rules, 2004 is awaited.

Decision: The information submitted in this regard was noted.

Action: NIL

61.18.10: NBA-UNDP Biodiversity Samrakshan Internship Program

On the occasion of the International Day for Biodiversity, 2020 the Hon'ble Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change had launched the 2nd cycle of NBA-UNDP

Biodiversity Samrakshan Internship Program. On the basis of an online and all-India competitive examination a set of 20 interns had been selected for the period of 11th January 2021-31stDecember, 2021. Chairperson, NBA and Dr. Kerketta, MoEF&CC appreciated the work progress and the sincerity of the interns.

Decision: The information submitted in this regard was noted.

Action: NIL

61.18.11: NBA-Young Professional Program

As a follow up of the Young Professional Program approved by the Authority in the 55th Authority (Agenda No. 55.16) held on 12th March, 2020, the Chairman NBA, informed that 23 Young Professionals were selected in scientific, legal, accounts and IT categories to provide technical support in the implementation of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 and other activities of NBA.

Decision: The information submitted in this regard was noted.

Action: NIL

61.01A: Revision of Agreement format for Form III applications for ease of doing business:

As per rule 18(5) of the Biological Diversity Rules, 2004, the approvals granted by the National Biodiversity Authority shall be in the form of a written agreement duly signed by an authorized officer of the Authority and the Applicant. The NBA secretariat is currently using the formats which were approved by 38th Authority meeting held on 04th July 2016. Over the years there has been an exponential increase in the Form III application processed by NBA. In the financial year 2020-21, NBA secretariat had cleared 1050 Form III applications and had signed 947 Form III agreements. While scrutinizing the stamp paper agreements, the NBA secretariat had observed that majority of the stamp paper agreements received from the applicant have errors in clauses and annexures. In such cases rectification letters have to be sent to the applicants requesting for submission of revised agreement. This back and forth process leads to considerable delay in execution of final agreement and wastage of man power.

2. In order to facilitate the ‘ease of doing business’ and to reduce the burden on the applicants and the NBA secretariat, a revised format for Form III agreement has been prepared and place for approval.

. In this proposed format, the applicants will have to give an online declaration while submitting the Form III application through e-filing portal and when NBA decides to grant approval, a four-page agreement will be executed. This new agreement format will significantly reduce the timeline and will enable granting of approvals in an expeditious manner.

Shri. Achalender Reddy, IFS (Retd) submitted his observations on some clauses and requested that the legal wing of the NBA Secretariat may examine them before finalizing the new format. Chairman, NBA informed that the revised format of Form III agreements would be implemented after examining the observations of the Member by the legal team.

Decision: The revised format of Form III agreements would be implemented after examining the observations of Shri. Achalender Reddy, Member, NBA

Action: Secretary, NBA

61.02A: Proceedings of the 4th Meeting of the India Biodiversity Award Jury and ratification of the winners for the India Biodiversity Awards 2020 held from 23rd - 25th April, 2021

The National Biodiversity Authority and the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Govt. of India in partnership with UNDP-India have been giving India Biodiversity Awards (IBA) in different categories since 2012 in recognition of the significant contributions made by individuals/institutions for conservation of biological diversity. The 5th IBA cycle was initiated in 2019. However, on account of COVID-19 pandemic the field validations of the shortlisted sites could not be completed before the International Day for Biodiversity (IDB), 2020 and the IBA process was put "on hold". The IBA Jury Members and the Biodiversity Samrakshan Internship Programme (BSIP) Interns have since completed the field validations of 29 shortlisted sites. The IBA Jury in its 4th meeting held virtually on 23, 24 and 25 April, 2021 finalized the names of IBA Awards Winners and IBA Jury Special Mentions

The IBA Jury also decided that IBA 2020 be renamed as IBA 21 and the next cycle shall be named as IBA 2023.

Decision: The Authority members approved the names of IBA Awards Winners and IBA Jury Special Mentions.

Action : NIL

61.03A: To consider the revised action plan for the utilization of the ABS amount accrued due to sale of Red Sanders by the Andhra Pradesh State Biodiversity Board

he Andhra Pradesh State Biodiversity Board vide letter dated 07.01.2020 submitted a proposal for the tune of Rs. 11.26 Cr for constitution of Biodiversity Management Committees, preparation of People's Biodiversity Registers in the Red Sander forest bearing areas as per recommendations of the report. After deliberations NBA issued an sanction order of NBA/Tech Gen/22/01/20-21/980 dated 14.07.2020 releasing an amount of Rs. 11.25 Crores accrued on account of sale of Red Sanders to Andhra Pradesh State Biodiversity Board for the formation of BMCs and documentation of PBRs and related activities that would help in the conservation of bioresources including Red Sanders. The Andhra Pradesh State Biodiversity Board vide letter 711/APSBB/Red Sanders/2017 dated 27.04.2021 has informed that formation of BMCs and preparation of PBRS in all the Red Sanders bearing districts have been completed. The APSBB in their approved minutes of the Board meeting held on 25.11.2020 have resolved to utilize the amount released by NBA in all the districts of the State for the formation of BMCs and preparation of PBRs as the budgetary support from the State Government is limited to the salaries of the staff of the board. The revised scheme for the utilization of the funds released by the NBA vide sanction order of NBA/Tech Gen/22/01/20-21/980 dated 14.07.2020 releasing an amount of Rs. 11.25 Crores to the AP State Biodiversity Board was placed before the Authority for approval.

Decision: The Authority members approved the revised scheme for the utilization of the funds of Rs. 11.25 Crores released by the NBA to the Andhra Pradesh State Biodiversity Board.

61.04A: Extension of tenure of the Expert Committee on Access and Benefit Sharing

NBA has extended the term of the Expert committee on Access and Benefit Sharing under the Chairmanship of DrR.V.Varma, Former Chairman, Kerala SBB and Shri K.S.Sugara IFS (Retd) as Co-Chair for evaluation of the ABS applications received by NBA and to examine techno-legal issues vide this office order no. NBA/Tech/EC/9/14/40/20- 21/204, dated 23rd April 2021 for a further period till 30th June, 2021. A copy of the Office Order was placed for ratification.

Decision: The Authority ratified the extension of the tenure of the Expert Committee on Access and Benefit Sharing for period till 30th June, 2021.

Action: NIL

The meeting ended with vote of thanks from and to the Chair.

Annexure I

List of Participants

Sl No	Name and Designation
	Official Members
1	**Dr. V.B. Mathur,** Chairman, National Biodiversity Authority, Chennai
2	**Dr. S. Kerketta,** Advisor &Scientist G,CS-III Division, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, New Delhi. s.kerketta66@gov.in
3	**Shri Ashwani Kumar, IAS.,**Joint Secretary (Seeds),Department of Agriculture and Cooperation,jsseeds-agri@nic.in
4	**Dr. Anamika Gambhir,**Scientist F, Department of Biotechnology, New Delhi, anamika@dbt.nic.in
5	**Dr. M.V. Ramanamurthy,**Director, National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR), Ministry of Earth Sciences, mvr@nccr.gov.in
6	**Dr. Sanjay Kumar,**Director, Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology, director@ihbt.res.in
7	**Dr. Gunasekaran,** Assistant Commissioner (Seeds), Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare
8.	**Dr. Manoj Kumar Modi,** Department of Biotechnology, New Delhi
	Non-official Members
9	**Shri. C. Achalender Reddy, IFS**(Retd.), Director, Centre for Innovations in Public Systems, achal.reddy@gmail.com
10	**Dr. Joykumar Meitei Laishram,**Professor and Dean,College of Agriculture, Central Agriculture University,jmlaishram@rediffmail.com
11	**Dr. Alka Rao,**Principal Scientist,CSIR- Institute of Microbial Technology(CSIR-IMTECH), Chandigarh – 160036, raoalka@imtech.res.in
12	**Shri. M.S. Chaitra,**Director and Fellow, Aarohi,chaitra78@gmail.com
	Special Invitee
13	**Dr. Tarun Kathula,** Director, CS-III Division, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Chang ,New Delhi
	Secretary to the Authority
14	**Shri. J. Justin Mohan,** IFS, Secretary, National Biodiversity Authority, Chennai