



## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE ON INTERSTATE COORDINATION FOR INTER STATE TIGER RESERVES

**1. Title:** Standard Operating Procedure for Interstate Coordination to strengthen Tiger Conservation.

**2. Subject:** Interstate coordination for strengthening tiger conservation across States which share interstate boundary within tiger reserve.

**3. Short summary:** This SOP provides the framework for dealing with interstate coordination issues related to tiger conservation.

**4. Scope:** This SOP is applicable to interstate bordering tiger reserves / PA / forest areas with significant tiger population, within the country.

**5. Responsibilities:** The Field Director's concerned shall be responsible in the case of a tiger reserve / fringe areas. For a protected area (National Park / Wildlife Sanctuary), the concerned protected area manager shall be responsible. In the case of forest areas, Divisional Forest Officer/ Deputy Conservator of Forests (under whose jurisdiction the area falls), shall be responsible. The overall responsibility at the State level shall rest with the Chief Wildlife Wardens of the States concerned.

### 6. Suggested activities for strengthening protection and enforcement:

- a) There shall be periodic joint patrolling among Tiger Reserves /PAs/ forests having common boundary and having significant tiger population in the border areas.
- b) Field staff during the course of patrolling/ field trips shall meet the field staff of the adjoining state **once a week** and share enforcement related information and report the same to their controlling officers (see Annexure for list of activities).
- c) Range Officers of borders areas of Tiger Reserves/ PAs and other forest areas shall meet at least **once a month** and discuss Inter Range and Interstate issues and report the same to the Deputy Director (Project Tiger)/ Wildlife Warden/ DFO concerned.
- d) The DFOs of Tiger Reserves, PAs and other forest areas having significant tiger population in the border areas shall meet together at least **once in three months** and discuss enforcement related issues and report the same to the concerned Conservator of Forests/ Chief Conservator of Forests / Field Director (Project Tiger).
- e) The Field Directors (Project Tiger)/ Conservator of Forests/Chief Conservator of Forests in charge of Tiger Reserves, PAs and other forests having significant tiger population along the border areas shall meet together at least **once in six months** and report the same to the Chief Wildlife Warden of the state.
- f) The Chief Wildlife Wardens of States having significant tiger population along the border areas shall meet together at least **once in a year** and discuss issues of mutual interest and concern related to wildlife management and tiger conservation. Such meetings shall be facilitated by Regional Offices of the National Tiger Conservation Authority with inputs from the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau.
- g) The sensitive areas/ check posts situated in the border areas shall be further strengthened by deploying monitoring mechanisms like CCTV, E-surveillance etc.



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- h) In order to facilitate joint patrolling and investigation of cross border wildlife crime cases, the State concerned shall issue appropriate order/ directives for movement of forest officials of bordering tiger reserves. In case of arresting fleeing offenders, full co-operation shall be extended to authorities concerned, when an interstate boundary is breached.

### **7. Suggested activities for gathering and exchange of intelligence:**

- a) Field Directors/ Conservator of Forests/Chief Conservator of Forests in charge of Tiger Reserves, PAs and other forests having significant tiger population along the border shall prepare a dossier of poachers/ potential poachers in the region and share the information among the staff of adjoining Tiger Reserve/ PA/ Division across the border.
- b) Such information shall include information on illegal entry points at Beat, Section, Range, Division and Circle level; photographs, addresses and biometrics of regular offenders across the border.
- c) Field Directors/ Conservator of Forests/Chief Conservator of Forests in charge of Tiger Reserves, PAs and other forests having significant tiger population along the border shall also share information on the progress of investigation in wildlife related crimes having interstate ramification; liaise with and share information/ inputs with Wildlife Crime Control Bureau; share information on licensed gun holders in the vicinity of Tiger Reserves, PAs and other important tiger-bearing forests etc.
- d) In addition, Field Directors/ Conservator of Forests/Chief Conservator of Forests in charge of Tiger Reserves, PAs and other forests having significant tiger population along the border shall also facilitate the conduct of joint annual inspection of boundaries; joint combing operations, monsoon patrolling; share information on good practices and staff welfare; conduct synchronized cattle vaccination, fire line clearance etc.
- e) A checklist of activities which is not exhaustive, and can be developed upon based on local level exigencies is provided in Annexure 1.

### **8. Suggested activities Management of Invasive Alien Species:**

- a) Field Directors/ Conservator of Forests/Chief Conservator of Forests in charge of Tiger Reserves, PAs and other forests having significant tiger population along the border areas shall facilitate preparation of a joint operational strategy for dealing with Invasive Alien Species (IAS).
- b) Preparation of such a strategy shall also be based on scientific inputs received from Research institutions in IAS management across the landscape and shall not be in contravention to prescriptions of TCPs of the Tiger Reserves concerned.
- c) Field Directors/ Conservator of Forests/Chief Conservator of Forests in charge of Tiger Reserves, PAs and other forests having significant tiger population along the



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border shall also share good practices on IAS management across the landscape and conduct of common capacity building programmes for staff.

- d) Field Directors/ Conservator of Forests/Chief Conservator of Forests in charge of Tiger Reserves, PAs and other forests having significant tiger population along the border shall have regular review of IAS management once in at least six months.

### 9. Suggested activities for Monitoring and capacity building:

- a) Field Directors/ Conservator of Forests/Chief Conservator of Forests in charge of Tiger Reserves, PAs and other forests having significant tiger population along the border areas shall share information related to inter-state migration of major species with main focus on tiger.
- b) Field Directors/ Conservator of Forests/Chief Conservator of Forests in charge of Tiger Reserves, PAs and other forests having significant tiger population along the border areas shall organize synchronized estimation of tiger, elephants, vulture and other species sharing share common borders and management concerns. **Phase IV assessment as outlined by the NTCA, shall be harmonized before finalizing to avoid double counting.**
- c) Field Directors/ Conservator of Forests/Chief Conservator of Forests in charge of Tiger Reserves, PAs and other forests having significant tiger population along the border areas shall facilitate regular interactive visits for the staff and stakeholders of Tiger Reserves, PAs and other tiger bearing forests across the landscape.

### 10. Human wildlife conflict management (HWC):

- a) Field Directors/ Conservator of Forests/Chief Conservator of Forests in charge of Tiger Reserves, PAs and other forests having significant tiger population along the border areas shall strive to ensure utmost coordination among themselves and staff so that important issues/ operations of HWC occurring across the border are informed to their counterparts in bordering states.
- b) Special emphasis should be laid on sharing data on payment of compensation which shall help assess conflict hot spots as non payment shall invariably result in an antagonistic mindset which may lead to retaliatory killing of tigers. Further, the rates of compensation need to be harmonized between bordering states as victims of conflict may question rationale of differential rates. If it is difficult to get Government sanction for the highest prevailing rate in the area, then the balance may be met through the Tiger Conservation Foundation after due approval of the Governing Body.
- c) Field Directors/Conservator of Forests/Chief Conservator of Forests in charge of Tiger Reserves, PAs and other forests having significant tiger population along the border areas shall facilitate sharing of information on the locations of capture/ translocation and release of problematic animals which can prevent spreading of sensational propaganda.



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- d) Field Directors/ Conservator of Forests/Chief Conservator of Forests in charge of Tiger Reserves, PAs and other forests having significant tiger population along the border areas shall facilitate sharing of expertise and resources available for dealing with HWC on request when the need arises. Common resources of the States' concerned shall be pooled in and utilized for the purpose.

### 11. Dealing with animal diseases

- a) As the human-wildlife-livestock interface is ever increasing, it is important to prevent diseases spreading across these hosts. In this context, Field Directors concerned should identify such interface areas in their respective states
- b) In coordination with State Veterinary officials, identify major pathogens affecting livestock and pet animals in the area and prioritise them with respect to their prevalence and pathogenicity
- c) Keeping in mind principles of herd immunity, in consultation with veterinary officials, carry out vaccination of 60 to 70% of animals prior to onset of the disease. The time shall vary from disease to disease. Vaccinating animals in this manner shall create immunization buffers which shall act as a "firewall" between livestock and wildlife and reduce the likelihood of transmission of disease to wild animals
- d) Joint veterinary camps need to be thought out well in advance based on the identified diseases' dynamics in the ecosystem.

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ANNEXURE: List of activities which need to be jointly monitored. Please note that the list is not exhaustive and should be developed upon by field managers based on local conditions.

1. Data on tigers dispersing in human dominated landscapes, besides conflict prone areas
2. Data on tigers which have been fitted with transmitters
3. Information on movement of suspects and repeat offenders including presence/absence of these people in the area
4. Data on poaching events
5. Data on encroachment and illicit fellings
6. Data on payment of compensation
7. Data on biometrics of arrested offenders
8. Data on incidents of floods/fire
9. Information in respect of water availability and status of waterholes in bordering areas to get an idea of wildlife distribution
10. Information on invasive alien species spread
11. Information pertaining to progress of wildlife offences which are sub judice especially to monitor people on bail.
12. Data of registered arms in bordering areas
13. List of diseases prevalent in the area
14. Information in context of mortality of livestock in fringes as well as wildlife inside forests, besides population details of livestock
15. Phase IV data