

6. National Board for Wildlife – Environment

The Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change chaired the 88th meeting of the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife (SC-NBWL).

Context and Statutory Basis

Legal foundation – The Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife (SC-NBWL) functions under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, particularly the provisions on NBWL and its Standing Committee.

Policy context – The meeting reflects the recurring governance challenge in India– how to reconcile conservation obligations with infrastructure, public services, and strategic imperatives.

Core Objective of the Meeting – The Committee’s deliberations aimed to balance–

1. ecological sensitivity and statutory safeguards for wildlife habitats, and
2. legitimate needs of public utility services, infrastructure development, and national security.

Geographical and Administrative Scope of Proposals

Total proposals examined– 70 proposals.

Location category– in and around

1. Protected Areas
2. Wildlife Sanctuaries
3. Tiger Reserves
4. Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZs)

Key Sectors / Project Types Considered

The proposals broadly relate to services that directly affect local communities and strategic connectivity, such as Drinking water supply projects under Jal Jeevan Mission (public health + welfare outcomes). Primary and Community Health Centres (basic healthcare access in/near remote areas). Road widening / road infrastructure (connectivity, but with potential habitat fragmentation risks). Installation of 4G mobile towers (digital connectivity; can involve forest land and tower access roads). Power transmission lines (energy access; risks include linear intrusion, tree felling, bird hits). Defence/strategic requirements (important in frontier regions; often emphasised as national security needs).

Monitoring and Policy Review– “Action Taken Report” (ATR)

The Committee reviewed the Action Taken Report on directions given in previous meetings, signalling a shift from only “approvals” to follow-through and compliance tracking.

1. accountability of user agencies/project proponents
2. post-clearance monitoring (often the weakest link in environmental governance)

Special Focus– Improving PARIVESH Portal – The meeting placed emphasis on process streamlining and transparency, including improving the PARIVESH portal.

These matters

1. better transparency in application status and conditions
2. faster inter-departmental coordination
3. stronger digital audit trails (reduces discretion and delays)

Standing Committee of NBWL

1) Statutory Status – The Standing Committee is constituted under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

2) Composition (as per the Act) – The Standing Committee consists of

- a. Vice-Chairperson
- b. Member-Secretary
- c. Not more than 10 members, nominated by the Vice-Chairperson from among NBWL members.

3) Chairperson (operational practice) – In practice and official releases, the Standing Committee is chaired by the Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, who heads the committee meetings.

4) Role in “Balanced Development” – The Standing Committee is central to ensuring that activities in/around PAs/ESZs proceed with

1. ecological safeguards
2. mitigation measures (wildlife passages, timing restrictions, site selection)
3. conditional clearances and compliance requirements

PARIVESH Portal

1) Full Form and Nature

PARIVESH – *Pro-Active and Responsive facilitation by Interactive, Virtuous and Environmental Single-window Hub*. It is a Single-Window Integrated Environmental Management System for online submission, tracking, monitoring, and processing of multiple clearances.

2) Launch Details

Launched by the Prime Minister on World Biofuel Day (10 August 2018) as part of the Digital India governance push.

3) Implementing Institution

Designed, developed and hosted by MoEF&CC, with technical support from NIC.

4) Clearances Covered

PARIVESH enables applications for

- a. Environmental Clearance (EC)
- b. Forest Clearance (FC)
- c. Wildlife Clearance
- d. CRZ Clearance

5) Key Objectives

Improve–

1. transparency
2. accountability
3. efficiency

Promote Ease of Doing Responsible Business, i.e., faster workflows while retaining environmental safeguards. Integrate clearances across Central/State/District levels, including SEIAA workflows where applicable.

Source– <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2216052®=3&lang=1>