

Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE) of Protected Areas (PAs)

January 12, 2021

In news

The Environment Minister releases Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE) of 146 National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries. And also launches a framework for the Management Effectiveness Evaluation of Indian Zoos (MEE-ZOO) and Marine PAs

What are the protected areas?

Protected areas (PAs) are the cornerstone of efforts to conserve biodiversity and the environment and provide associated recreational, economic and social benefits to humans

Global prospects on Protected areas (PAs)

There are 2,38,563 terrestrial and inland water protected areas recorded in the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA), covering almost 7% of the global ocean and terrestrial protected areas covering just under 15% of global land and spread in 245 countries and territories

India's Protected Areas (PAs): Current status

- India's major portion of biodiversity are being safeguarded as Protected Areas (PAs).
- India has systematically designated its PAs in four legal categories viz. National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves under Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and as per this Act, India have setup 903 formally designated

PAs with the total coverage 1,65,012.65km² (5.02% of the countries geographical area).

- Among 903 PAs, 101 National Parks, 553 Wildlife Sanctuaries, 86 Conservation Reserves and 163 Community Reserves (as on 1st January, 2020).
- The National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries are presently the categories being subjected to evaluation through management effectiveness evaluation (MEE) process.

What is Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE)?

Protected area (PA) management effectiveness evaluation (MEE) is defined as the assessment of how well NP&WLS are being managed—primarily, whether they are protecting their values and achieving the goals and objectives agreed upon. The term ‘management effectiveness’ reflects three main themes of PA management:

1. Design issues relating to both individual sites and PA systems
2. The adequacy and appropriateness of management systems and processes
3. Delivery of the objectives of NP&WLS, including conservation of values.

Evaluation of management effectiveness is generally carried out by assessing a series of criteria (represented by carefully selected indicators) against agreed objectives or standards.

MEE is a very important document that provides valuable guidance on various aspects of wildlife and protected area expand MEE of Marine Protected Areas.

In 2018-19, the MoEFCC with technical assistance from Wildlife Institute of India has conducted the MEE of 146 NPs and WLS

Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE) is based on IUCN

World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)

Significance of MEE

MEE can:

- Enable and support an adaptive approach to management
- Assist in effective resource allocation
- Promote accountability and transparency
- Help involve the community and build constituencies
- Promote the values of NP&WLS.

Why do we need evaluation or/ and assessment?

The need to evaluate PA management effectiveness has become increasingly well recognised internationally over the last one and a half decades. Assessment of management effectiveness has emerged as a key tool for PA managers and is increasingly being required by governments and international bodies.

For example, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Programme of Work for Protected Areas calls on all State Parties to continue to expand and institutionalize management effectiveness assessments to work towards assessing 60% of the total area of NP&WLS using various national and regional tools and report the results into the global database on management effectiveness maintained by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre of the United Nations Environment Programme

Key findings

The results of the present assessment are encouraging with overall mean MEE score of 62.01% which is higher than the global mean of 56%. With this round of evaluation, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) successfully completed one full cycle of evaluating all terrestrial National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries of the country from 2006 to 2019.

According to the survey, Tirthan Wildlife Sanctuary and Great

Himalayan National Park in Himachal Pradesh have performed the best among the surveyed protected areas.

The Turtle Wildlife Sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh was the worst performer in the survey.

Framework for Management Effectiveness Evaluation of Indian Zoos (MEE-ZOO) and of Marine Protected Areas

- A new framework for MEE of Marine Protected Areas has been also jointly prepared by WII and MoEF&CC and it will be very useful document to implement.
- The framework proposes guidelines, criteria and indicators for evaluation of zoos of the country through Management Effectiveness Evaluation Process (MEE-ZOO) in a manner which is discrete, holistic and independent.
- The assessment criteria and indicators look beyond the traditional concepts, include issues of animal welfare, husbandry and sustainability of resources and finance.
- The MEE-ZOO exercise is moving towards developing highest standards in Zoos across India and adhering to core values of accountability, transparency, innovation, use of technology, collaboration and integrity to achieve the mandate of conservation of endangered species
- The Minister also announced that from this year onwards 10 best National Parks, 5 coastal and Marine parks and top five Zoos in the country will be ranked and awarded every year.