

Ecological Sensitive Areas – Kerala State

Background

Based on the report and the recommendations of the Expert Committee constituted by the State, the State Government had recommended an area of 9993.7 sq. km. in 123 villages, which includes 9107 sq. km. forest ESA and 886.7 sq. km. non-forest ESA against 13108 sq. km. in 123 villages given in Dr Kasturirangan Report (HLWG) and the Ministry accepted the recommendation and issued the Draft Notification dated 10.03.2014.

This draft notification was reissued five times without any modification as far as Kerala State is concerned. After the latest notification dated 06th July, 2022, there has been correspondence from the State Government to MoEF&CC regarding reduction in villages and ESA area in the State of Kerala. Besides, there were several requests, complaints, suggestions from the public regarding the demarcation of ESA villages and the regulations put up with it. Government have been considered the representations and complaints raised by public, the pros and cons of imposing restrictions on areas identified as ESA, in a State like Kerala where density of population is high and per capita availability of land is very less.

The State has raised the concerns of public and intimated that some discrepancies are observed in the maps and number of villages in the meeting chaired by Shri A.K. Mehta, Additional Chief Secretary, MoEF&CC on 11th April 2018 and assured that the Government would submit its final version along with the areas and maps for the consideration of the Ministry.

After detailed discussions with all stakeholders, the State Government has been taking a consistent stand that ESA in the Western Ghat portion of the State shall be restricted only to Reserve Forests, Protected Areas, World Heritage Sites, etc and excludes the inhabited areas, plantations, rivers, streams, fragmented forests, etc. Accordingly the Directorate of Environment and Climate Change prepared the ESA maps and marked its geo-coordinates by assessing the spatial data obtained from Kerala Forest Department, Survey of India toposheets, cadastral maps and satellite images.

MoEF&CC convened an online meeting of the representatives of Western Ghats States on 05th October 2021. In this meeting, the Ministry suggested a new approach of Core and Non-Core ESA in the States. The Additional Chief Secretary (Environment) who attended the meeting affirmed the State's contention on ESA and requested to restrict the ESA in forest areas only. Subsequently, on 3rd and 4th December 2021, the Ministry convened a Chief Minister level meeting at Delhi. Sri. K.N. Balagopal, Hon'ble Minister of Finance

attended the meeting along with Additional Chief Secretary (Environment) and reiterated the State's earlier stand and expressed the State's dissent on Ministry's new proposal.

Concurrently, there are several complaints/grievances from public against the final report submitted by the State about the discrepancies in village boundary, inclusion of private lands, geo-coordinates, etc. especially from Ernakulam, Thiruvananthapuram and Kannur districts. To address the complaints / grievances, the Government constituted a District Level Scrutiny Committee under the Chairmanship of District Collectors to ascertain the ESA of the State by crosschecking the village and forest boundaries by including all the forest areas and by excluding the inhabited areas.

During the visit of the Sri. Sanjay Kumar (IFS Retd) Chairman, Expert Committee on Western Ghats, the Chief Secretary intimated that the final geo-coordinated maps shall submit after rectifying the errors by fine tuning at District level and necessary directions were already issued to District Collectors for the task. It is also submitted that the Committee during its visit perceived the semi-urbanised status and the economic activities pursuing in the ESA villages.

Subsequently, the State Government reworked the ESA documents submitted to the MoEF&CC on 16.06.2018. According to the re-assessment, the total ESA area is now finalized as **8711.98 sq.km in 98 villages**. The number of villages are increased due to the formation of new villages by bifurcating the earlier ESA villages and the ESA area is increased due to inclusion of reserve forests, forest lease areas and modification of village boundaries by the Revenue authorities.

The district and village wise details are as follows:

Village wise Details of Proposed ESA				
Thiruvananthapuram				
Sl. No.	Taluk	Village	Village Area (sq.km)	ESA (sq.km)
1	Kattakkada	Amboori	15.53	01.97
2	Kattakkada	Vazhichal	126.50	114.23
3	Nedumangad	Peringammala	166.54	135.66
4	Nedumangad	Thennur	102.51	81.92
5	Nedumangad	Vithura	155.92	131.88
Total			567.00	465.66

Kollam				
Sl. No.	Taluk	Village	Village Area (sq.km)	ESA (sq.km)
6	Pathanapuram	Piravanthur	148.47	111.86
7	Pathanapuram	Punnala	49.59	37.52

8	Punalur	Aryankavu	147.97	113.08
9	Punalur	Channapetta	22.35	13.18
10	Punalur	Edamon	60.85	42.22
11	Punalur	Kulathupuzha	329.55	316.18
12	Punalur	Thenmala	70.99	46.19
13	Punalur	Thingalkarikkakom	59.36	48.42
Total			889.13	728.65

Pathanamthitta				
Sl. No.	Taluk	Village	Village Area (sq.km)	ESA (sq.km)
14	Konni	Aruvappulam	458.80	424.40
15	Konni	Chittar	22.03	2.12
16	Konni	Seethathodu	577.47	542.21
17	Konni	Thannithodu	174.86	145.41
18	Ranni	Kollamula	59.94	28.03
19	Ranni	Perunad	192.68	143.52
20	Ranni	Vadasserikkara	57.23	24.17
Total			1543.01	1309.86

Idukki				
Sl. No.	Taluk	Village	Village Area (sq.km)	ESA (sq.km)
21	Devikulam	Anaviratty	24.28	2.40
22	Devikulam	Edamalakkudy	222.75	222.75
23	Devikulam	Kanthaloor	47.85	34.39
24	Devikulam	KDH	210.73	56.83
25	Devikulam	Keezhanthoor	67.33	57.10
26	Devikulam	Kottakamboor	35.27	28.32
27	Devikulam	Mankulam	107.88	78.01
28	Devikulam	Mannamkandam	195.78	143.81
29	Devikulam	Marayur	110.16	99.58
30	Devikulam	Munnar	141.15	28.83
31	Devikulam	Pallivasal	37.83	8.13
32	Devikulam	Vattavada	31.19	20.12
33	Devikulam	Vellathooval	26.19	1.01
34	Idukki	Idukki	248.09	207.03

35	Idukki	Kanchiyar	78.79	43.80
36	Idukki	Kanjikuzhi	93.11	38.59
37	Peerumedu	Kumily	187.67	149.62
38	Peerumedu	Manjumala	87.29	42.53
39	Peerumedu	Mlappara	569.94	569.94
40	Peerumedu	Peerumedu	47.43	4.28
41	Peerumedu	Periyar	68.23	14.06
42	Peerumedu	Peruvanthanam	75.73	14.29
43	Peerumedu	Upputhara	40.55	4.22
44	Thodupuzha	Udumpannoor	85.84	35.17
45	Udumbanchola	Bisonvalley	38.14	3.81
46	Udumbanchola	Chinnakkanal	67.05	14.53
47	Udumbanchola	Pooppara	41.24	15.28
48	Udumbanchola	Santhampara	37.98	0.74
Total			3025.47	1939.17

Ernakulam				
Sl. No.	Taluk	Village	Village Area (sq.km)	ESA (sq.km)
49	Kothamangalam	Kuttampuzha	519.28	479.77
Total			519.28	479.77

Thrissur				
Sl. No.	Taluk	Village	Village Area (sq.km)	ESA (sq.km)
50	Chalakkudy	Athirapally	348.59	340.62
51	Chalakkudy	Pariyaram	341.76	302.95
Total			690.35	643.57

Palakkad				
Sl. No.	Taluk	Village	Village Area (sq.km)	ESA (sq.km)
52	Alathur	Kizhakkancheri-I	41.72	1.64
53	Attappady	Agali	76.37	7.80
54	Attappady	Kallamala	76.00	50.05
55	Attappady	Kottathara	73.44	34.47
56	Attappady	Padavayal	282.43	254.81
57	Attappady	Pudur	98.50	82.82

58	Attappady	Sholayoor	122.40	88.68
59	Chittoor	Muthalamada-I	235.00	174.68
60	Chittoor	Nelliyampathy	393.02	392.99
61	Mannarkkad	Palakkayam	112.61	71.19
62	Palakkad	Malampuzha-I	126.28	88.86
63	Palakkad	Pudusseri East	69.34	44.87
64	Palakkad	Puthupariyaram I	77.14	63.90
Total			1784.25	1356.76

Malappuram				
Sl. No.	Taluk	Village	Village Area (sq.km)	ESA (sq.km)
65	Nilambur	Akampadam	90.57	57.86
66	Nilambur	Amarambalam	84.79	36.78
67	Nilambur	Chokkad	53.61	30.10
68	Nilambur	Kalikavu	38.89	7.45
69	Nilambur	Karulayi	285.60	258.93
70	Nilambur	Karuvarakundu	39.14	9.27
71	Nilambur	Kerala Estate	41.41	12.05
72	Nilambur	Kurimbalangode	83.79	44.10
73	Nilambur	Pothukallu	150.15	117.95
74	Nilambur	Vazhikadavu	139.20	101.60
Total			1007.15	676.09

Kozhikode				
Sl. No.	Taluk	Village	Village Area (sq.km)	ESA (sq.km)
75	Koilandi	Chakkittappara	113.05	89.88
76	Koilandi	Chembanoda	50.14	32.69
77	Thamarassery	Kattippara	32.32	15.50
78	Thamarassery	Kodancheri	57.73	13.61
79	Thamarassery	Nellippoyil	50.51	28.24
80	Thamarassery	Puthupadi	45.44	12.16
81	Thamarassery	Thiruvambadi	70.77	25.46
82	Vadakara	Kavilampara	92.04	34.94
83	Vadakara	Thinur	40.66	7.63
Total			552.66	260.11

Wayanad

Sl. No.	Taluk	Village	Village Area (sq.km)	ESA (sq.km)
84	Mananthavadi	Periya	62.67	27.24
85	Mananthavadi	Thirunelli	147.15	122.25
86	Mananthavadi	Thondernad	96.70	67.65
87	Mananthavadi	Thrissilery	54.58	28.69
88	Sulthanbethery	Kidanganad	176.44	162.66
89	Sulthanbethery	Noolpuzha	125.36	104.15
90	Vaithiri	Chundel	21.93	7.03
91	Vaithiri	Kottappadi	58.68	22.37
92	Vaithiri	Kunnathidavaka	26.13	9.57
93	Vaithiri	Pozhuthana	50.81	28.20
94	Vaithiri	Thariyod	54.49	50.60
95	Vaithiri	Vellarimala	54.82	35.10
Total			929.76	665.51

Kannur				
Sl. No.	Taluk	Village	Village Area (sq.km)	ESA (sq.km)
96	Iritty	Aralam	118.10	43.93
97	Iritty	Kottiyur	97.65	66.30
98	Thalassery	Cheruvanchery	98.33	76.60
Total			314.08	186.83

Summary

District	No. of Villages	Total Village Area (sq.km)	Total ESA (sq.km)
Thiruvananthapuram	5	567.00	465.66
Kollam	8	889.13	728.65
Pathanamthitta	7	1543.01	1309.86
Kottayam	0	0	0
Idukki	28	3025.47	1939.17
Ernakulam	1	519.28	479.77
Thrissur	2	690.35	643.57

Palakkad	13	1784.25	1356.76
Malappuram	10	1007.15	676.09
Kozhikode	9	552.66	260.11
Wayanad	12	929.76	665.51
Kannur	3	314.08	186.83
Grand Total	98	11822.14	8711.98

Village wise comparison between new proposal and Draft Notification

District	No. of Villages		Excluded Village	Included Village
	Draft ESA	New		
Thiruvananthapuram	7	5	Kallikad, Mannoorkara	
Kollam	8	8	No Changes	
Pathanamthitta	6	7		Chittar*
Kottayam	4	0	Poonjar Thekkekkara, Teekoy, Koottickal, Melukavu	
Idukki	47	28	Anakkara, Anavilasom Arakkulam, Ayyappankovil, Chakkupallom Chathurangappara Erattayar* , Kalkoonthal Kanthipara, Karunapuram Kokkayar, Konnathady Kunjithanny, Kattappana Pampadumpara Parathodu, Rajakkad Rajakumari, Thankamany Udumbanchola Upputhodu, Vandanmedu Vathikudi	Munnar* , Edamalakkudy* , Vellathooval, Anaviraty (Devikulam Taluk); Kanchiyar* (Idukki Taluk); Peerumedu (Peerumedu Taluk); Santhanpara (Udumbanchola Taluk)
Ernakulam	1	1	No Changes	
Thrissur	1	2		Athirapally*
Palakkad	14	13	Muthalamada II	
Malappuram	10	10	Chungathara	Pothukallu*
Kozhikode	9	9	Kedavur	Kattippara*
Wayanad	13	12	Achoornam	
Kannur	3	3	No Changes	
Grand Total	123	98		

* Bifurcated from old ESA villages and added as ESA villages

Area wise comparison between new proposal and Draft Notification

District	Draft ESA Notification		New Proposal		Difference (sq.km)
	No. of Villages	Area (sq. km)	No. of Villages	Area (sq. km)	
Thiruvananthapuram	7	459.27	5	465.66	6.39
Kollam	8	796.03	8	728.65	-67.37
Pathanamthitta	6	1392.50	7	1309.86	-82.64
Kottayam	4	22.99	0	0.00	-22.99
Idukki	47	2651.12	28	1939.17	-711.93
Ernakulam	1	595.89	1	479.77	-116.12
Thrissur	1	660.33	2	643.57	-16.76
Palakkad	14	1371.90	13	1356.76	-15.16
Malappuram	10	770.05	10	676.09	-93.95
Kozhikode	9	278.15	9	260.11	-18.04
Wayanad	13	740.64	12	665.51	-75.14
Kannur	3	254.92	3	186.83	-68.09
Grand Total	123	9993.78	98	8711.98	-1281.80