
Guidelines for establishment of new zoo under Section 38H (1A) of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972

The Justification for continuance of existing zoos and establishment of new zoos lies in their capacity to develop self-sustaining and genetically and behaviourally viable populations of animals pertaining to endangered species in the wild, for use as gene pool to be used for long-term conservation of these species and to muster support of the zoo visitors in the national efforts for conservation of wildlife. It is well established that the potential of the zoos to discharge the expected role as mentioned above is directly linked to the presence of dedicated scientific staff that has the requisite skills in various aspects of planning and management and the availability of resources necessary for maintaining the highest standards of animal housing, display, upkeep and healthcare of the animals housed their in. With a view to provide the desired direction and thrust to zoos of the country, the Central Government has through amendment of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 and notification of Recognition of Zoo Rules prescribed minimum standards and norms for housing , upkeep and healthcare of animals housed in the zoos and set up a Central Zoo Authority to oversee the operation of the zoos in the country and to provide technical and other assistance to the zoos for achieving the prescribed standards and norms for animal housing, upkeep and healthcare. However, the endeavour of the Central Government to bring a qualitative improvement in the management has not yielded the desired results because of the fact that most of the zoo operators still continue to perceive zoos as adhoc animal collections maintained for public recreation. There is little awareness among the general public about the role of zoos as centres for conservation of wildlife. As a result, requisite technical manpower and necessary equipments for carrying out the management of the zoos in a planned and scientific manner are not made available. Many times getting adequate feed for the animals and providing proper upkeep and healthcare also becomes a challenging task on account of serious resource constraints being faced by the zoos. Such unplanned and sub-standard zoos are not only counter productive to the cause of conservation but also paints a very poor image of the zoos of the country.

Surprisingly proposals for establishment of new zoos continue to be developed taking little care to ensure adequate inputs for proper planning, zoo designing, construction and operation of the zoo, often leading to further impoverishment of the existing zoos.

Being concerned with the state of management of zoos in the country Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, vide their order dated 27.11.2000, have directed that the State Governments and Union Territories shall not set up any new zoo without getting approval of Central Zoo Authority and order of the Hon'ble Supreme Court. A provision has also been made by the Central Government in the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 to the effect that no new zoo shall be established without prior approval of the Central Zoo Authority.

The Central Government hereby makes following guidelines for grant of approval by the Central Zoo Authority for establishment of new zoos:-

1. Central Zoo Authority shall not entertain any proposal for establishment of a new zoo unless it is accompanied by a "Detailed Project Report" giving detailed appraisal of the proposed zoo site, 'mission-vision-theme' of the zoo and detailed strategy for housing, upkeep and healthcare of the animals and their display for developing amongst visitors an empathy for wild animals and motivation for supporting the national conservation efforts.
2. Central Zoo Authority shall not grant approval for a new zoo unless it is satisfied that the establishment of the zoo shall be instrumental in:-
 - (i) Providing highest standards of housing, upkeep and healthcare to significant number of animals, presently housed in sub-standard and inappropriately managed zoos.
 - (ii) Carrying out of path breaking research for developing innovative strategy for enhancing the reproductive potential, neonatal care and genetic and behavioural management of endangered species of wildlife.
 - (iii) Setting up of state of art facility on use of innovative methods of display of zoo animals that is congenial to the welfare of the animals and motivates the visitors for conservation.
3. Central Zoo Authority before granting approval for establishment of a new zoo shall satisfy itself:-
 - (i) that zoo site has adequate land of appropriate quality (free of all incumbrances, water logging, sewage and storm water drains) is available for construction of the zoo and for raising tree belts of adequate width to act as buffer against noise pollution and air pollution.

- (ii) project proponents have requisite availability of water, energy and finances on-sustained basis for construction and operation of the zoo, including payment of salary/ emoluments of technical personnel, to be required as per the provision of Recognition of Zoo Rules.
 - (iii) There is likelihood of part of operation cost of the zoo being met through revenue earned by the zoo.
 - (iv) Requisite numbers of qualified and experienced persons are available for preparing the detailed plan of the zoo and its effective execution.
 - (v) No animals from wild are proposed to be acquired for display purposes.
4. Central Zoo Authority while examining any proposal of the State Government/ Union territories for establishment of a new zoo and recommending such cases to the Hon'ble Supreme Court shall satisfy itself on following additional points:-
- (i) State Government/ Union Territory has made adequate provisions in its budget to meet the operational costs of all the existing zoos being operated by it, including the salary of zoo personnel as per standards and norms prescribed under "Recognition of Zoo Rules" and all the posts sanctioned in the budget have been duly filled.
 - (ii) All the conditions stipulated by the Central Zoo Authority at the time of grant of recognition to the zoos being operated by the State Government/ Union Territories have been fully complied with.
 - (iii) All the zoos operated by the State Government/ Union Territories, that have been refused recognition have stopped their operations and the animals housed therein have been rehabilitated appropriately.
 - (iv) No resources and professional experts from existing zoos are being re-appropriated for establishment of the new zoo.

No permission to establish a new zoo shall be granted by the Central Zoo Authority unless all the conditions stipulated in para 2, 3 & 4 have been fully satisfied.

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