



National Biodiversity Authority Releases SOP for Scientific Identification and Notification of Threatened Species by States and Union Territories

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In a major step towards strengthening biodiversity conservation in the country, the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) has released a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Notification of Threatened Species under Section 38 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002. The SOP aims to facilitate a uniform, transparent and scientifically robust process for the identification, assessment and notification of threatened species by States and Union Territories.

India is one of the world's megadiverse countries, harbouring a rich variety of plants, animals and ecosystems. However, species are becoming threatened due to habitat degradation, overexploitation, pollution, invasive alien species and climate change. Conserving these species is essential for maintaining ecological balance, safeguarding ecosystem services and securing biodiversity for future generations.

Section 38 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 empowers the Central Government, in consultation with the concerned State Government, to notify any species that is on the verge of extinction or is likely to become extinct in the near future as a Threatened Species. The notification regulates or prohibits its collection and provides for appropriate measures for its rehabilitation and conservation. The Central Government may also delegate these powers to the State Governments. So far, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has notified 159 plant species and 173 animal species as threatened species pertaining to 17 States and 3 Union Territories.

The SOP has been developed to assist State Biodiversity Boards and Union Territory Biodiversity Councils in undertaking the identification of threatened species in a consistent, transparent and scientifically rigorous manner and recommending the same to the State Government for notification. It provides a clear step-by-step framework covering scientific assessment, stakeholder consultations, validation, notification, conservation planning, monitoring and periodic review.

The SOP promotes the use of the best available scientific evidence, field-based assessments and traditional knowledge while ensuring the participation of local communities, Biodiversity Management Committees, the Botanical Survey of India, the Zoological Survey of India, academic institutions and subject experts.

The initiative assumes added significance in view of the Biological Diversity (Access to Biological Resources and Knowledge Associated thereto and Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits) Regulations, 2025, which provide differential treatment in determining benefit-sharing obligations where biological resources belong to species notified as threatened under Section 38 of the Act.

The SOP also emphasises the preparation of species recovery and conservation action plans following notification, along with regular monitoring and periodic review to assess conservation outcomes and emerging threats. These measures will enable timely and targeted interventions for the recovery of species

facing extinction risks.

The release of the SOP marks another important milestone in India's efforts to conserve biodiversity and prevent species extinctions. It contributes to the implementation of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2024–2030, particularly Target 4 on halting human-induced extinction of species, promoting species recovery and maintaining genetic diversity, as well as the goals and targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

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