

UNESCO CATEGORY 2 CENTRE ON WORLD NATURAL HERITAGE  
MANAGEMENT AND TRAINING FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGION,  
WILDLIFE INSTITUTE OF INDIA, DEHRADUN  
&  
MANGROVE WILDLIFE DIVISION, RAJNAGAR, WILDLIFE WING, GOVT. OF  
ODISHA



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Report of **Consultation Workshop for  
Stakeholders and Outcomes**

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August 2015

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Natural heritage conservation in Asia and the Pacific region has been facing many challenges in recent years as a result of extreme pressure exerted on natural ecosystems. These pressures are a consequence of high density of the population, risk of catastrophic disasters, constant economic growth and persistent poverty. As shown by the outcome of the second cycle of Periodic Reporting (2012) conducted by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties in Asia and the Pacific, capacity building for World Heritage conservation and management remains a key concern in the region. In particular, very few countries are equipped with proper natural heritage training facilities.

To address the above situation, the Government of India in September 2012, submitted to the Director-General, UNESCO a “Request for Action” towards the establishment of a Centre of Excellence on Natural World Heritage for Asia and the Pacific region at the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), an internationally acclaimed institution in the field of natural resource conservation located in Dehradun, as a Category 2 Centre under the auspices of UNESCO. Finally in UNESCO General Conference 37 C/Resolution 47 dated 19 November 2013 granted approval to the proposal and the **UNESCO Category 2 Centre** was established.

### **Mission**

The centre's mission is to strengthen implementation of World Heritage Convention in Asia and the Pacific Region by building the capacity of all those professionals and bodies involved with world natural heritage site inscription, protection, conservation and management in Asia and the Pacific Region, through training, research, dissemination of information and network building.

1.2 **Mangrove Wildlife Division, Gupti** is under the umbrella of Wildlife Wing of Odisha Forest Department.

1.3 An MoU is signed between UNESCO Category 2 Centre, Dehradun and Odisha Forest Department for drafting the dossier of Bhitarkanika Conservation Area (BCA). Bhitarkanika Conservation Area is on the India's Tentative list for nomination for UNESCO WHS since 2009. Henceforth, the final dossier needs to be submitted by 30<sup>th</sup> Sept, 2015 for completeness check. The areas included under BCA are –

- Bhitarkanika National Park & Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary (672 sq km)
- Gahirmatha Wildlife Sanctuary (1435 sq km)
- Mahanadi Delta (47.26 sq km)

## **2. Purpose and Structure of Report**

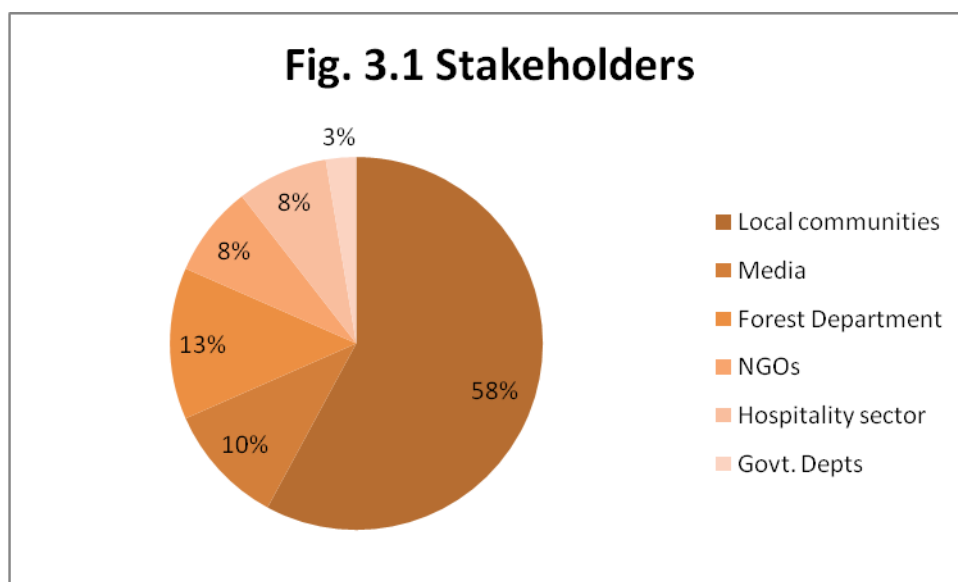
2.1 This Report presents the outcomes of Consultation Workshop for Stakeholders which sets out factual information relating to the Purpose of the Meetings, reflects on Discussions and concludes with recommendations arising from the interaction of various stakeholders.

### 3. Establishing the stakeholder workshops

3.1 Mangrove Wildlife Division, Gupti, being the local counterpart, made arrangements for conducting the Consultation Workshop for Stakeholders in Forest Guest House, Gupti. They were entrusted with responsibility of –

- Correspondence with local stakeholders - Local communities (EDC/VSS/PRI etc), NGOs, Hospitality sector, Govt. Depts, Forest Department and Media
- Logistics arrangement in Forest Guest House, Gupti

3.2 A total of 45 individual stakeholders attended the consultative workshops. A breakdown of attendees is shown in Figure 3.1 below and a full list of attendees is provided in Appendix 1 (will be attached). Prior to the workshop, each of them were given a workshop kit consisting of programme schedule, information of BCA, a folder, a pen, a notepad.



3.3 An analysis of the individual stakeholders shows that 58% comprised of representatives from local communities in and around Bhitarkanika Conservation Area, 13% were from Forest Department, 10% were from Media, 8% were from NGOs and Hospitality sector and 3% from Govt. Depts. This is considered to be a relatively balanced group in the context of inscribing a site as UNESCO World Heritage Site.

3.4 Out of 45 individual stakeholders, 13 of them put forward their views on BCA and its future.

## 4. The Agenda of the Workshop

The meetings began with a welcome by Mr. Pandu, ACF, Gupti, Bhitarkanika National Park, Odisha. It was followed with an introduction to the event by Shri Manoj Nair, Scientist – F, UNESCO Category 2 Centre. He talked about the importance of Bhitarkanika Conservation Area on regional, national and global level. Thereafter it was taken over by Dr. Bhumesh Singh, Technical Officer, UNESCO Category 2 Centre. He explained about UNESCO World Heritage Sites, process of nomination, This was followed by an interactive session during which delegates were invited to answer a series of questions using a PC and remote access handsets allowing individual and immediate responses. This was useful in establishing a benchmark so as to allow both Officers and delegates to assess whether or not the objectives of the meeting had been met.

- To sensitize the people living around the BCA
- To learn from knowledge and experience of the local people
- To foster a sense of ownership in them
- To seek their help and support in the process