

**Sub-regional Implementation Meeting
of
a long-term programme for
Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants
(MIKE)
in South Asia**

New Delhi, India
25 – 26 February 2003

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1. Welcome and Opening

Welcome and opening remarks were made by Mr Nigel Hunter, Director of the MIKE Programme.

Apologies were given on behalf of Mr H. M. B. C. Herath and Mr Amaratne of Sri Lanka who were unable to attend the meeting. Nevertheless, the Director was informed verbally of their support and commitment to the MIKE process. He informed the meeting that he would be following up with a visit to Sri Lanka to bring them up to date on the decisions taken at this meeting.

The Director introduced the representatives of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and gave his thanks to Dr Karl Stromayer of the Division of International Conservation of the US Fish and Wildlife Service which had made available the funding for this implementation meeting. The CITES Secretariat was represented at the meeting by the Deputy Secretary-General, Dr Jim Armstrong.

Dr Armstrong welcomed the participants to Delhi, and expressed his personal satisfaction at seeing the MIKE process initiated in Asia. The origin of the MIKE programme can be traced back to CITES CoP 10 in 1997, with the adoption of Resolution Conf. 10.10. MIKE is a site based sampling system which has had great support from the African range States in its initial phase of implementation. The CITES Secretariat is keen to see its implementation start in Asia as the information provided at site, national, sub-regional and continental levels will help the conservation of the Asian elephant. The administrative structure of MIKE is innovative and serves as an effective conduit for communication between the CITES Secretariat and range States. The institutional benefits of MIKE will last long after the external support for the MIKE programme has ended. Dr Armstrong emphasized that the MIKE Programme aimed at providing the long-lasting institutional capacity necessary for CITES Parties to sustainably manage their wildlife resources.

2. Objectives of MIKE

A presentation summarizing the objectives and intended benefits and results of the MIKE programme was made by the MIKE Director. A copy of the presentation is attached here in Annex I.

In summary, the purpose of MIKE is to provide information needed for elephant range States to make appropriate management and enforcement decisions, and to build institutional capacity within the range States for the long-term management of their elephant populations. The importance of capacity building and providing the range States with information was emphasized.

The main benefit therefore will include an increased knowledge of elephant numbers and the changes in these numbers and a better understanding of the threats to their survival, as well as the associated knowledge of other species and their habitats generally.

3. Institutional Arrangements

3.1 Structure and Coordination

The diagram depicting the MIKE institutional arrangements has been adopted in the African Sub-regions and is attached in Annex II. This structure was being recommended by the MIKE Director for consideration in Asia.

As mandated by CoP 11, the implementation of MIKE is the responsibility of the Standing Committee, who have in turn established a Sub-committee, known as the MIKE Sub-group, to carry out that responsibility. Prior to the establishment of the Central Co-ordinating Unit and a MIKE Director to head the unit, the implementing action has been undertaken by the CITES Secretariat, but this has now been delegated to the Director, who reports to the Deputy Secretary General and the MIKE Sub-group. The Director and his Central Co-ordinating Unit are located in Nairobi, Kenya.

Each of these Sub-regions will have their MIKE implementation supervised by a Sub-regional Steering Committee (SSC), comprising of range state representatives (usually nominated at the level of a Wildlife Director or equivalent). The SSC will elect a chairperson who will become the main contact person for the MIKE Director. The MIKE implementation will be facilitated by a Sub-regional Support Office, who reports to the Director. Each Range State would then have a National Officer and Site officers as the core staff for implementing MIKE in their respective countries.

In addition, there is a MIKE Technical Advisory Group (TAG). This group comprises one expert drawn from each Sub-region and, to date, 4 extra nominated specialists. The principal role of the TAG is to guide the technical quality of MIKE processes and techniques. The TAG also acts as a peer review group and any challenge on any outcomes of analysis may be referred to them.

3.2 Roles and Terms of Reference

The roles of the National and Site officers were outlined by the Director. These are attached as Annex III.

In addition there would be a Sub-regional Support Officer (SSO), who would be appointed full time by MIKE to provide technical support to the South Asian sub-region. The terms of reference for this officer are provided in Annex IV and they reflect the request of the meeting to specify the role of the SSO in regard to the SSC and its chairman.

3.3 Decisions taken

The following decisions on the Institutional Arrangements for MIKE were reached by the range States :

- i) The establishment of the Sub-regional Steering Committee, National Officers and Site Officers was approved. (It was recognized that this structure was the essential one and did not preclude developing it to take into account the participation of different institutions and federal/state relationships)
- ii) The nomination of India as Chair of the Sub-regional Steering Committee for the period of 2 years was proposed and approved. The Chair shall be on a rotational basis and elected by the range States.
- iii) The location of the Sub-regional Support Office in New Delhi was proposed and duly approved.

As a result of these decisions, each range State was requested to send their nominations to the MIKE Director for the Steering Committee member, National and Site Officers before the end of March 2003.

4. Site Selection

4.1 List of MIKE Sites for Phase I Implementation

13 sites (possibly 15 with Sri Lanka) were identified by the range States for the start-up of MIKE implementation with some reserved sites for MIKE implementation in future.

The Director will follow up with Bhutan and Sri Lanka on the confirmation of their sites.

- i) India

No	Region/State/Province	Sites	Priority	Estimated Population	Area (sq km)	Remarks
1.	Uttaranchal (Northern India)	Shivalik Elephant Reserve	4	1391	5405	
2.	Karnataka (Southern India)	Mysore Elephant Reserve (E.R.)	1	5838	6724	
3.	Tamilnadu (Southern India)	Nilgiri E. R.	2	1938	4663	
4.	Kerala (Southern India)	Wayanad E.R.	5	961	1200	
5.	West Bengal (North-East India)	Eastern Dooars E.R.	6	165	978	Bordering Bhutan
6.	Assam (North-East India)	Western Assam E.R.	3	807	2837	Borderin Bhutan
7.	Meghalaya (North-East India)	Garo Hills E. R.	7	878	3500	Bordering Bangladesh
8.	Assam (North-East India)	Dibru E.R.	9	457	1197	Bordering Myanmar
9.	Arunachal Pradesh (North-East India)	Deomali E.R.	10	150	900	Bordering Myanmar
10.	Orissa (Eastern India)	Mayurbhanj E.R.	8	565	3214	

ii) Bangladesh

No	Forest Division / District	Sites	Priority	Estimated Population	Area (sq km)	Remarks
11.	Chittagong/Chittagong District	Chunati Game Reserve	1	24-30		Resident population

iii) Nepal

No	District	Site	Priority	Estimated Population	Area (sq km)	Remarks
12.	Western Nepal	Royal Shukla Phanta Wildlife Reserve	1	Not certain	155	Bordering India

iv) Bhutan

No	District	Site	Priority	Estimated Population	Area (sq km)	Remarks
13.	Southern Bhutan	Royal Manas National Park	1			Bordering India's Western Assam E.R.

v) Sri Lanka

In his visit in December 2002, Sri Lanka had proposed two possible sites for MIKE implementation to the Director, one of which is the Yala National Park.

4.2 List of 2nd Phase Sites

i) Bangladesh

Aside from the priority site of the Chunati Game Reserve in the Chittagong Forest Division, the Sherpur Forest Area (Sherpur District, Mymensingh Forest Division) was listed by Bangladesh as a site for possible future MIKE implementation.

ii) Nepal

Similarly in Nepal, aside from the priority site of Royal Shukla Phanta Wildlife Reserve, three further sites were listed as sites for possible future MIKE implementation :

- Extension of Royal Shukla Phanta Wildlife Reserve into its adjacent corridor
- Koshi-Jhapa Wildlife Reserve (177sq km) in eastern Nepal
- Royal Chitwan National Park (932 sq km) and Parsa Wildlife Reserve (499 sq km) in southern Nepal

4.3 Some Funding Considerations

i) Matching Fund Commitment from India

The 10 sites nominated by India were agreed on the basis that MIKE external funds and Project Elephant would provide matching funds on a 50-50 arrangement.

ii) Bhutan Population Surveys

It was further agreed that the Director would seek funding to assist Bhutan to get a better understanding of its entire elephant population and distribution pattern.

5. MIKE Forms

The forms that are currently being used for data collection in the four sub-regions in Africa were tabled. It was emphasized that these forms need to be adapted to the needs of Asian elephants and the parties were invited to provide input for improving them. The forms were specifically designed to ensure that all information is compatible and can be analyzed so as to take into account cross border populations.

On the Daily Patrol forms, it was suggested that this should be adapted to take into account the situation of ground patrols in the sub-region. All patrols are conducted in compartments known as "beats", who know at all times where and how their patrol routes are. The Patrol forms could therefore be simplified to render them more relevant to the situation on the ground.

On the Carcass report form, this should be used not only for any carcass found within a site, but throughout the elephant range. There is also a need to adapt the Live Elephant Observations form to assist in monitoring male tuskers and the male – female ratios.

It was **agreed** that the adaptation of these Forms will be discussed in detail and agreed when the meeting to tackle the issue of methodology for population survey is convened in Bangalore in May 2003.

6. Population Survey

It was proposed and agreed that a meeting to discuss the methodology for population survey of the Asian elephants shall be convened in Bangalore (or possibly in Mulumala (Tamil Nadu)) between May – June 2003. The parties were requested to provide recommendations to the Director as to the names of experts from their range States who should be invited to attend.

7. Data Management

Inputs were provided by the range States for improving the draft Data Policy which prescribes the procedure for information and data handling, access and release policy and protocols under the MIKE process.

The revised draft of the Data Policy is attached in Annex V.

8. Next Steps

The following list outlines the next steps that need to be taken towards the full implementation of MIKE in the South Asia subregion:

Range States

- Formally nominate in writing the National Subregional Steering Committee member, National Officer and Site Officers by 31 March 2003.
- The range States were requested to submit a list of suitable candidates for two additional nominations to the Technical Advisory Group. Recommendations will be made through the CITES Secretariat and appointment will be approved by the MIKE Sub-Group.

Director of the MIKE Central Coordinating Unit

- Submission of funding proposals : 2 – 3 months to secure

The Director would commence the process for grant applications to donors, in particular the Asian Elephant Conservation Fund of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The matching funds from Japan will be utilized for the recruitment and office start-up for the Sub-regional Support Officer for South Asia.

- Recruitment of the SSO :

It was agreed by all representatives that the recruitment process of the SSO should be speeded up. The range States will submit as soon as possible names of suitable candidates from their sub-region and shortlisting and selection will be made by the MIKE Director in consultation with the Chairman of the SSC.

If the shortlist process fails, the position of the SSO will be advertised.

- Convene Methodology Meeting : May 2003

Dr Sukumar shall be the focal point for coordinating the meeting date and venue in Bangalore, or possibly in Mulumala (Tamil Nadu).

- Procurement of Equipment: Date dependant on obtaining funds

- GPS equipment
- Computer systems

(Dr Sukumar to provide advice on the potential suppliers.)

- Identify 1st Regional Training Workshop : May or June onwards, dependent on funds

The convening of the first training workshop for all National and Site Officers will be subject to the recruitment of the SSO and office start-up in New Delhi.

- Follow-up visit by the Director to Sri Lanka and Bhutan scheduled in May/June.

9. Concluding Remarks and Closure

The Director expressed his gratitude to the range States for their participation. A “follow –up” trip to Sri Lanka and Bhutan was scheduled to resolve and detail their participation in the MIKE Programme for South Asia. Special thanks was given to Mr S. S. Bist and his team for their assistance in organizing the meeting in Delhi, in particular the Central Zoo Authority for providing the audio-visual equipment.

Mr Bist, Director, Project Elephant of India took the opportunity to express his thanks to the CITES Secretariat, the USFWS and the MIKE CCU on behalf of all the range States representatives. Mr Bist expressed his appreciation of the objectives of MIKE and noted as the Chairman of the SSC, that he would certainly take advantage of the structure to discuss the details surrounding the implementation of the MIKE monitoring system, in particular, the capacity-building aspects which may be especially important to Bhutan.

The meeting was closed by Dr Armstrong on behalf of the CITES Secretariat who expressed his admiration and congratulation to the range States for their vision in adopting the MIKE mechanism at the sub-regional level. The level of cooperation, collaboration and constructive dialogue experienced during this meeting bodes well for the development of the MIKE into a valuable national management tool and a crucial mechanism for effective management of the Asian elephants.

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