

282

**BEFORE THE FIRST APPELLATE AUTHORITY
FOREST SURVEY OF INDIA KAULAGARH ROAD P.O. IPE
DEHRADUN - 248195**

APPEAL U/S. 19(3) OF RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT

Mr. Ganpat Sidhaye
H.No.45, Matav Wada,
Britona, Bardez - Goa 403101

.... Appellant

V/S.

The Public Information Officer,
Forest Survey of India
Kaulagarh Road P.O. IPE
Dehradun - 248195

.... Respondent

Sir/Madam,

1. The appellant had filed RTI application dated 11/11/2024 with PIO Deputy Conservator of Forest working plan division, Panaji - Goa. The information was pertaining to the identification of Private Forest in the State of Goa. Copy of the application enclosed at page 1 to 3
2. The Necessary information at Para 2 and 3 of the application was not provided by the PIO Goa. Hence the appellant preferred an appeal with the Goa State Information Commission vide appeal No. 79/2025/GSIC/1108.
3. The GSIC disposed off the application directing the PIO Goa State to transfer the application to the respondent. Copy of the order enclosed at page 4 to 11
4. Accordingly the application was transferred to the respondent vide letter dated 01/08/2025 by the PIO Goa State. Copy of the application enclosed at page 12
5. Now the respondent has replied that the necessary information sought is not available with the respondent. Pg 13
6. The appellant respectfully submits as below:-
 - i) The Hon'ble NGT Directed the State Government to constitute review committee to evolve internal mechanism to identify and demarket forest areas as identified by Thomas Araujo Committee.

- ii) The Criteria adopted for identification of private forest was
 - a) 75% of the tree composition of such lands should be of Forest Species.
 - b) The area should be either contiguous to the Government Forest land or if in isolation, the minimum area should be 5 ha; and
 - c) Canopy density should not be less than 0.4
- iii) For considering the criteria of canopy density forest cover maps from forest survey of India were referred.
- iv) As per the interim report of the review committee No. ____ in para 3 it is stated as below. *Copy of report pg 14 to 20*

Superimposing on Forest Cover Maps/Classified image (Pg 18)

As a part of approved methodology the review committee in coordination with National Remote Sensing Centre and Forest survey of India (FSI), a high quality LISS IV Satellite image was specially analysed for preparation of Forest Cover Map as per the Private Forest Criteria (canopy density & area criteria) by Forest survey of India. Forest survey of India was consulted on formation of the review committee and approval of methodology. However, due to COVID – 19 related lockdowns FSI could start their work on time effectively and started only in May, 2020.

(Pg 19)

The Forest Cover Map (FCM) of 2014-15 prepared by FSI constitutes polygons with more than 40% canopy and area more than 5 Ha and less than 5 Ha, with later analysed for proximity to Government Forest. Digitised Survey numbers of North and South Goa Divisions (Thomas and Araujo) committees have been superimposed on FCM maps/polygons of FSI for analysis.

It is also mentioned in the report that the forest cover maps of 2014-2015 from FSI could only be received on 15/10/2020. *(Pg 19)*

- v) From the above it is clear that the information sought by the applicant is available with FSI.
- vi) The Public Information Officer, Panaji Goa in its submission with the GSIC stated that the Forest Cover Maps has been prepared on composite basis by Forest Survey of India. *(Pg 22)*

280

vii) Further it is also stated that the FCM shared with the department is not available in public domain and is protected under the intellectual property law and that they are not authorised to share the same. *Ref pg 23 and pg 10*

viii) The appellant argued that the maps prepared by the FSI are not under intellectual property and the same was accepted by GSIC.

ix) Accordingly GSIC directed the Public Information Officer, Panjim Goa to transfer the application to the PIO Forest survey of India, based on the arguments submitted by the Forest Department of Goa.

7. In view of above the appellant request the authority to kindly direct the Public Information Officer FSI Dehradun to provide the information to the appellant in the form as available as per the RTI Act.

Place: Dehradun

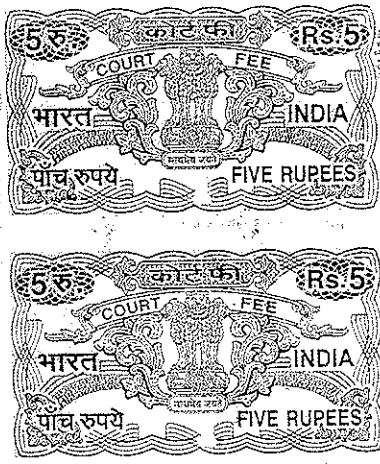
Date: 6/10/2025

Ganpat Sidhaye

GANPAT SIDHAYE

Mobile No. 9764148006

Email Id: ganpatsidhaye90@gmail.com



From:
Ganpat Sidhaye
House number 45
Matavwada, Britona,
Bardez Goa - 403101
Mobile: 9764148006
Date: 11/11/2024

To,
The Public Information Officer
Office of Chief Conservator of Forest Vanbhavan,
Altinho Panaji Goa.

Sub: Issue of information under Right to Information Act 2005

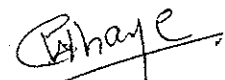
Sir,

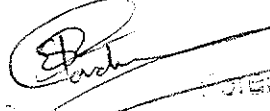
Kindly provide me following information

- 1) Inspection and issue of plans pertaining to private forest in village Penha de Franca Bardez Taluka identified by Sawant Karapurkar committee including adjoining survey number identified by Deepshikha Sharma committee and notified by the government in the official Gazette series II No. 25 dated 22/9/2022
- 2) Inspection and issue of plans pertaining to private forest in village Penha de Franca provisionally identified by Thomas committee as private forest and accepted as qualified by Review committee headed by chief Conservator of Forest Goa notified vide number DCF(WP)PVT. For/ 16 (THC)2013(WZ)//19-20/119 DATED 18/6/2020 in their part final reports uploaded on Forest Department site excluding area given under Para 1
- 3) Inspection and issue of parameters as recorded by field and office team of the review committee which were considered for deleting survey numbers pertaining to private forest in village Penha de Franca provisionally identified by Thomas committee as private forest and not accepted as qualified by Review committee headed by chief Conservator of Forest Goa notified vide number referred in para 2 above in their part final reports. (for example if sur. no 184 is not qualifying as private forest canopy density, area and forestry tree species noted and verified by concern teams may be furnished).

I am citizen of India and Rs.10/- court fee stamp is attached to the application.

Yours faithfully,


(Ganpat Sidhaye)


Dy. C.
V.
A.
Date: 11/11/2024

Toom, Gampat Sidhaye
H. No 45, Matawada.
Britona Bardez - Goa,
Mob. 9764148006
Date 7/01/2025

2
228

To,
The Public Information Officer
Office of the Dy. Conservator of Forest
Working plan division
Goa bhavan Altinho
Panaji Goa

Sub: RTI-2025

Ref: NO DCF (WP) RTI-105/2024-25/766 dt 20/11/2024

Sir,

With reference to the above and my letter
dt 18/11/2024, inspection was conducted
on 7/01/2025. You are requested to issue
certified copy of FSI data for the
State survey numbers pertaining
to Penha de França village.

Yours faithfully,

Sidhaye

RECEIVED

Sidhaye
07/01/25

Dy. Conservator of Forests,
Working plan division,
Altinho, Panaji - Goa
Date:

From:
Ganpat Sidhaye
H. No. 45, Matav wada,
Britona, Bardez- Goa.
Mobile No. 9764148006

Date: 18/12/24

To,
The Public Information Officer,
Office of the Dy. Conservator of Forest,
Working Plan Division,
Goa Van Bhavan, Altinho,
Panaji - Goa.

Subject: - Right to Information Act 2005.

Ref. No. DCF (WP) RTI-105/2024-25/766 dated 20/11/2024

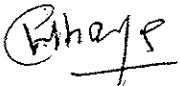
Sir,

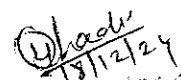
With reference to the letter referred above and my application dated 11/11/2024, I visited your office on 17/12/2024. As per the discussion with you, I hereby submit the survey nos for providing information as per para 3 of the application.

Survey Nos. 46, 110, 114, 115, 116, 133, 134, 135, 139, 140, 146, 147, 149, 150, 151, 181, 182, 183, 184, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191 and 52 (part).

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,


Ganpat Sidhaye

RECEIVED

Dy. Conservator of Forests,
Working Plan Division,
Altinho, Panaji - Goa

Appeal No. 79/2025/SCIC/1396

Shri Ganpat V Sidhaye,
H.No. 45, Matavwada,
Near Shambho, Mahadev Temple,
Britona, Bardez-Goa 403101.

-----Appellant

V/s

1.The Public Information Officer,
Office of Chief Conservator Forest,
Working Plan Division,
Goa Van Bhavan,
Altinho, Panaji-Goa 403001.

2.The Public Information Officer,
Office of the Dy. Conservator of Forest,
North Goa Division,
Ponda Goa 403401.

---Respondents

To,

1)Shri Ganpat V Sidhaye,
H.No. 45, Matavwada,
Near Shambho, Mahadev Temple,
Britona, Bardez-Goa 403101.

2)The Public Information Officer,
Office of Chief Conservator Forest,
Working Plan Division,
Goa Van Bhavan,
Altinho, Panaji-Goa 403001.

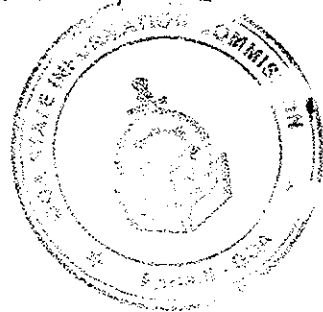
3)The Public Information Officer,
Office of the Dy. Conservator of Forest,
North Goa Division,
Ponda Goa 403401.

Whereas the Appellant above named has filed to this Commission, the above Appeal No.79/2025/SCIC under Right to Information Act, 2005.

And Whereas, the above matter came up for hearing before this Commission (Coram: Aravind Kumar H. Nair, SCIC) on 08/07/2025;

And upon hearing both the parties, this Commission has passed the Order and an authenticated copy of which is enclosed herewith for necessary action.

Given under my hand and seal on this day of 30th July 2025.



By Order of Commission,

(Avit S. Naik)

Under Secretary cum Registrar, GSIC

Encl: Authenticated Order copy.

GOA STATE INFORMATION COMMISSION

"Kamat Towers" 7th Floor, Patto Plaza, Panaji, Goa – 403 001

E-mail: spio-gsic.goa@nic.in Website: www.scic.goa.gov.in**Appeal No. 79/2025/SCIC**

Shri Ganpat V. Sidhaye,
H. No. 45, Matawada,
Near Shambho Mahadev Temple,
Britona, Bardez-Goa 403101.

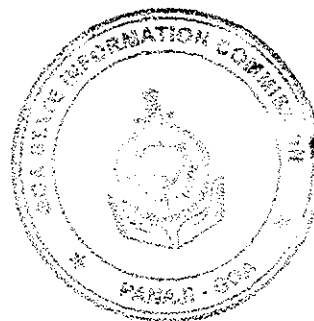
-----Appellant

V/s

1.The Public Information Officer,
Office of Chief Conservator Forest,
Working Plan Division,
Goa Van Bhavan,
Altinho, Panaji-Goa 403001.

2.The Public Information Officer,
Office of the Dy. Conservator of Forest,
North Goa Division,
Ponda Goa 403401.

---Respondents

**Shri. ARAVIND KUMAR H. NAIR - State Chief Information Commissioner, GSIC****Relevant Facts Emerging from the Appeal**

RTI application filed on	- 11/11/2024
PIO replied on	- 20/11/2024
First Appeal filed on	- 18/12/2024
First Appellate order on	- 06/02/2025
Second appeal received on	- 24/02/2025
Decision of the Second Appeal on	- 08/07/2025

Information sought and background of the Appeal

1. Shri. Ganpat V. Sidhaye filed an application dated 11/11/2024 under RTI Act, 2005 to the PIO, O/o the Dy. Conservator of Forests, Working Plan Division, Goa Van Bhavan seeking following information :
 - i. "Inspection and issue of plans pertaining to private forest in Village Penha De Franca, Bardez Taluka identified by Sawant Karapurkar committee and notified by the Government in the Official Gazette Series II, No. 25 dated 22/09/2022.
 - ii. Inspection and issue of plans pertaining to private forest in Village Penha De Franca provisionally identified by Thomas Committee as private forest and accepted as qualified by Review Committee headed

by Chief Conservator of Forest, Goa and notified vide dated 18/06/2020 in the part final reports uploaded on Forest Department site.

- iii. *Inspection and issue of parameters as recorded by field and office team of the review committee which were considered for deleting survey numbers pertaining to the private forest in Village Penha De Franca."*

2. In response to the RTI application, PIO (Dy. Conservator of Forests, Working Plan Division, Panaji) vide letter dated 20/11/2024 replied to the Appellant as under :

"Query No.1 -	Transferred to Dy. Conservator of Forest(N).
Query No.2 -	Review is in progress.
Query No. 3 -	You may visit this office on any working days."

3. With reference to the above said letter, Appellant visited the office of the PIO on 17/12/2024 and subsequently vide letter dated 18/12/2024 submitted Survey Numbers 46,110,114-116,133-135, 139-140, 146-147, 149-51, 181-184, 186-191 and 52 to provide information (inspection and issue of parameters).
4. Appellant then filed first appeal dated 06/02/2025 before the First Appellate Authority (Conservator of Forests) stating that when the Appellant visited the office of the Respondent No.1, he was asked to submit specific survey numbers on which information is required and accordingly a letter dated 18/12/2024 was submitted to the Respondent PIO specifying the survey numbers. According to Appellant after lot of pursuance, he was allowed inspection on 07/01/2025 and based on inspection, a letter dated 07/01/2025 submitted to the Respondent No.1 to issue certified copy of FSI data to the survey numbers pertaining to Penha De Franca Village. However, no information is provided till date. Respondent No.2 also not provided information. Appellant prayed before the FAA to direct Respondent No.1 and 2 to furnish necessary information.

5. FAA (Conservator of Forests) vide order dated 24/02/2024 directed Respondent No.1 (PIO/Dy. Conservator of Forests, Working Plan Division) to provide the relevant communication dated 31/01/2025 by today to Appellant and Respondent No. 2 (PIO/Dy. Conservator of Forests, North Goa Division) to re-issue the notice to inspection by fixing a reasonable time limit.

6. It may be mentioned that the Respondent No.1 vide letter dated 30/01/2025 (which is referred in the FAA's order) informed the Applicant as under :

"The Forest cover map has been prepared on composite basis by Forest Survey of India (FSI). As many survey numbers in the sought map is yet to be reviewed by the Review Committee, sought information cannot be provided in isolation for reviewed survey numbers alone as mother data layer is not available with this Department."

7. As per the material available before the Commission, copy of the Official Gazette, Government of Goa, Series No. 25, dated 22nd September, 2022 containing details of Survey Numbers identified as private forests having an area of 46.11 sq. km and accepted by Hon'ble NGT vide order dated 18/08/2020 in original Application No. 479/2018 and copy of an interim report of Review Committee on Review of Private Forest Areas identified by North Goa and South Goa District Committee also attached with the present appeal by the Appellant.

8. Appellant the approached the Commission with Second appeal dated 26/03/2025 stating that information sought is about private forest and total 46.11 sq.km area is notified in the Official Gazette, Series II dated 22/09/2022. Survey Numbers pertaining to Penha De Franca are at Page 14. As the plans are already available with the department, the same should be issued to the Appellant. Appellant prayed before the Commission that Respondent be directed to provide necessary information without further delay.



Facts Emerging in Course of Hearing

9. Pursuant to the filing of the present appeal, parties were notified fixing the matter for hearing on 21/05/2025 for which Appellant and Respondent No.1 appeared in person but Respondent No. 2 was represented by APIO and ACF, North Goa Division, Ponda. Respondent No.1 filed submission along with enclosures with an additional copy of the Appellant.
10. Representative of Respondent No. 2 filed reply dated 20/12/2024 sent to the Appellant in response to the RTI application received on transfer from Respondent No.1 Presiding Commissioner directed the representative of the Respondent No.2 to provide inspection by the Appellant at the office of the Respondent No. 2 on May 30, 2025.
11. Respondent No.1 in the written reply dated 21/05/2025 submitted that :
- Inspection and issue of plans pertaining to private forest in Village Penha De Franca, Bardez Taluka identified by Sawant Karapurkar Committee are notified by the Government in the Gazette, Series II No. 25 dated 22/09/2022.
 - Inspection and issue of plans pertaining to private forest in Village Penha De Franca provisionally identified by Thomas committee as private forest and accepted as qualified by review committee in their final reports uploaded on Forest Department site excluding area given in above para.
 - Upon verification and inspection of available records by the Appellant on 07/01/2025, further requested to provide Forest Survey of India data for survey numbers pertaining to Penha De Franca Village vide letter dated 07/01/2025.
 - The forest cover map has been prepared on composite basis by Forest Survey of India (FSI). Since many survey numbers in the sought map are yet to be reviewed by the review committee, the sought information cannot be provided in isolation for review survey number alone as mother data layer is not available with the Forest



Department. In addition, review work of private forest is still under examination.

- e. The FCM shared with the Forest Department, Goa is not available in public domain and is protected under the 'Intellectual Property Law' so the question of denying the information intentionally by Respondent 1 does not arise.

12. Respondent No.2 filed a copy of the letter dated 20/12/2024 replying to the Appellant as under :

"Since the information asked for is voluminous in nature, you may inspect the file on a convenient date and working hours by intimating the office in advance."

13. Matter was called out for hearing on 16/06/2025. Appellant filed written submission stating that FCM does not fall under the Intellectual Property Law and Forest Survey of India is a government entity and the data collected or prepared is by using public fund and public machinery. Hence cannot be denied unless the same falls under the 'secret' documents pertaining to the defence and interest of the country. Appellant further submitted that the Respondents have deleted and included private forest areas of the state on the basis of the criteria of areas and forest canopy density and the public has full right to know whether the exercise has been done properly or not.

14. Matter was called out for final hearing on 08/07/2025 for which Respondents and Appellant appeared in person.

Respondent No.1 (PIO, Dy. Conservator of Forest Working Plan Division) submitted that the information sought by the Appellant pertains to the Forest Survey of India (FSI) data. The information supplied to the Respondent by the FSI was on a confidential basis and hence Respondent is unable to unilaterally disclose it to the Appellant. Respondent further submitted that :

- i. The information sought by the Appellant specifically concerning survey numbers of Village Penha De Franca of Bardez taluka is an



integral part of the larger Forest Survey of India data for the state of Goa.

- ii. It is crucial to note that the review of private forest survey numbers provisionally identified by Thomas and Araujo Committees within the State of Goa is currently incomplete and under progress.
- iii. Since the Forest Survey of India has provided the Respondent with a comprehensive Forest Cover Image of Goa State, which in its current form due to the ongoing review process cannot be shared as a standalone or disaggregated piece of information without potentially compromising the ongoing survey and review.
- iv. The requested information cannot be provided by the Respondent at this juncture due to its confidential nature and ongoing review process. Hence the appropriate authority to address such a request would be the Public Information Officer, Forest Survey of India and the applicant is very well aware of the same.

DECISION

- i. Besides written submission by the Appellant and Respondents to the present appeal, arguments held in detail on the information sought by the Appellant vide RTI application dated 11/11/2024. During the course of proceedings, Respondent No.1 (PIO, Dy. Conservator of Forest, Working Plan Division, Panaji, Goa) made it emphatically clear that the information sought by the Appellant pertains to the Forest Survey of India (FSI) data. Since the information sought by the Appellant is an integral part of the larger Forest Survey of India data for the State of Goa and the same cannot be provided to the Appellant by the Respondent at this juncture due to confidentiality of the sought data and the ongoing review process, there is no other option but to transfer the Appellant's original RTI application to the Public Information Officer, Forest Survey of India u/s 6(3) of the RTI Act, 2005.

- ii. [The Respondent No. 1 (PIO, Dy. Conservator Forest, Working Plan Division, Panaji, Goa) hereby directed to transfer the RTI application dated 11/11/2024 to the PIO, FSI, Dehradun within five days from the receipt of this order with a copy of the Appellant compliance report to the Commission accordingly.]

Matter disposed. Proceedings in the present Appeal No.79/2025/SCIC stands closed.

Aggrieved party if any, may move against this order by way of a Writ Petition as no further Appeal is provided against this order under the Right to Information Act, 2005.

- Proceeding stands closed.
- Pronounced in open Court.
- Notify the parties.



(ARAVIND KUMAR H. NAIR)
State Chief Information Commissioner, GSIC

Authenticated Copy
Under Section 19(1) of the RTI Act, 2005
Goa State Information Commission
Panaji - Goa



**Government of Goa
Office of The Dy. Conservator of Forests
Working Plan Division
"Goa Van Bhavan"
Altinho Panaji Goa - 403 001**

No. DCF(WP)/RTI-105 /50(P)/2025-26/570

Dated: - 01/08/2025

To,
The Public Information Officer,
Forest Survey of India,
Kaulagarh Road,
Dehradun - 248195, Uttarakhand.

Sub: Transfer of RTI Application dated 11/11/2024 filed by Shri Ganpat V. Sidhaye under Section 6(3) of the RTI Act, 2005 - regarding forest data.

Ref: 1. RTI Application dated 11/11/2024 & 07/01/2025 received from Shri Ganpat V. Sidhaye.

2. Order dated 30/07/2025 in Appeal No. 79/2025/SCIC by the Goa State Information Commission (GSIC), Panaji-Goa.

Sir/Madam,

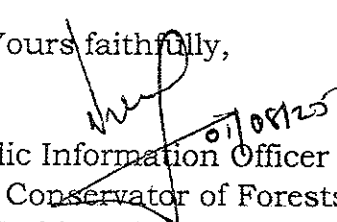
With reference to the subject cited above, the RTI application dated 11/11/2024 and 07/01/2025 submitted by Shri Ganpat V. Sidhaye, R/o H.No. 45, Matavwada, Britona, Bardez-Goa 403101, is hereby transferred to your office under Section 6(3) of the Right to Information Act, 2005 under information to this office.

As per the order issued by the Goa State Information Commission in the above-mentioned appeal, it has been held that the information sought by the applicant pertains to data of the Forest Survey of India (FSI) and falls within your jurisdiction.

The RTI application is enclosed herewith for further necessary action at your end. You are kindly requested to respond to the applicant directly under the provisions of the RTI Act, under intimation to this office.

This is submitted for your kind consideration and necessary action.

Yours faithfully,


Public Information Officer &
Dy. Conservator of Forests,
Working Plan Division,
Panaji-Goa.

Encl:

1. Original RTI application dated 11/11/2024 & 07/01/2025.
2. Copy of GSIC Order in Appeal No. 79/2025/SCIC dated 30/07/2025.

Copy to:

1. Shri Ganpat V. Sidhaye, H.No. 45, Matavwada, Britona, Bardez-Goa 403101 - for information and necessary facts.
2. The Goa State Information Commission, Panaji - for kind information with respect to order/decision dated 30/07/2025 in Appeal No.79/2025/SCIC/1396.

संख्या-13-2/2025-RTI-2254
भारत सरकार
भारतीय वन सर्वेक्षण
पे0ऑ0-आई0पी0ई0, कौलागढ़ मार्ग
देहरादून-248195

दिनांक: 11 सितम्बर, 2025

सेवा में,

Sh. Ganpat V. Sidhaye
H.No.-45, Matavwada,
Near Shambho, Mahadev Temple,
Britona, Bardez, Goa 403101.

Sub:- Information under RTI Act, 2005.

महोदय,

उपरोक्त विषय के संदर्भ में यह सूचित किया जाता है कि आपके आर.टी.आई. आवेदन दिनांक 11.11.2024 के द्वारा मांगी गई सूचना के संबंध में यह कहना है कि आपके पत्र द्वारा मांगी गयी सूचना भारतीय वन सर्वेक्षण, देहरादून में उपलब्ध नहीं है।

2. यदि आप इस उत्तर से संतुष्ट नहीं हैं तो इस पत्र की प्राप्ति की तिथि से तीस दिनों के भीतर आप निम्नांकित प्रथम अपीलीय प्राधिकारी के समक्ष अपील दायर कर सकते हैं।

श्रीमती मीरा अय्यर (प्रथम अपीलीय अधिकारी),
भारतीय वन सर्वेक्षण,
कौलागढ़ मार्ग, देहरादून-248195
फोन नं0.- 01352755037

भवदीया,



(गिरिजा अरोड़ा)

सहायक लोक सूचना अधिकारी

प्रतिलिपि:- CPIO, O/o of the Dy. Conservator of Forest, Working Plan Division, Goa Van
Bhavan, Altinho, Panaji-Goa 403001.



GOVERNMENT OF GOA

INTERIM REPORT OF REVIEW COMMITTEE ON REVIEW OF PRIVATE FOREST AREAS IDENTIFIED BY NORTH GOA & SOUTH GOA DISTRICT COMMITTEE (V. T. THOMAS & F. X. ARAUJO)

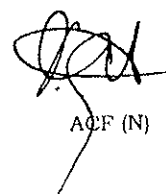
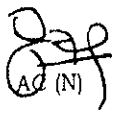
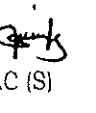
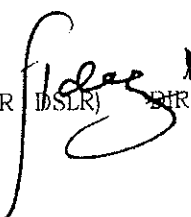
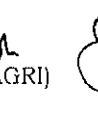
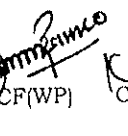
**Interim report of the review committee on review of
Private Forest provisionally identified by North and
South Goa Forest Division Committees (V.T. Thomas &
F.X. Araujo Committee)**

Introduction

Hon'ble NGT directed the state Government to constitute a committee and evolve internal mechanism to demarcate private forest areas in each of the land as private forest by Sawant and Karapurkar Committee vide order dated 07/01/2016 in Application No. 18(THC) /2013 (WZ). In pursuance to the aforesaid order, the Government of Goa, vide notification dated 23.04.2018 constituted a committee under DCF (Working Plan) to review identified Forest areas by earlier all committees, simultaneously disbanding the two Forest Division Committees (North and South Goa) also known as Thomas & Araujo committees constituted under Application No. 16(THC)/2013 (later O.A. No. 478/2018). The review committee chaired by DCF (Working Plan) submitted its report on 29.06.2019 reviewing all the areas identified by earlier Sawant & Karapurkar Committee only as per timeline fixed by Hon'ble NGT in O.A. No. 479/18. However, due to paucity of time, the committee did not submit any review report of the areas identified by two Forest Division Committees (North and South Goa) Thomas & Araujo committees.

Constitution of new review Committee

A committee (hereinafter referred as Review Committee"), to review Provisionally identified Private Forest areas by North and South Goa Forest Division Committees (also known as Thomas & Araujo Committee) was constituted vide Government of Goa Notification No. (WP)/Pvt. For/16(THC)/ 2013(WZ)/19-

 ACF (N)
  ACF (S)
  AC (N)
  AC (S)
  DIR (SLR)
  DIR (AGRI)
  DCF (WP)
  CCF

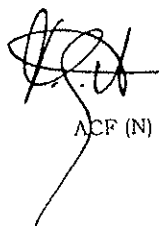
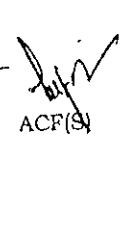
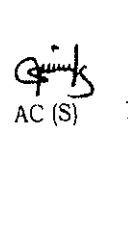
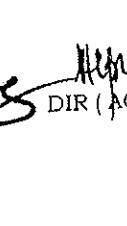
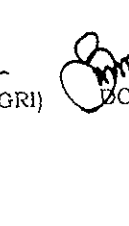
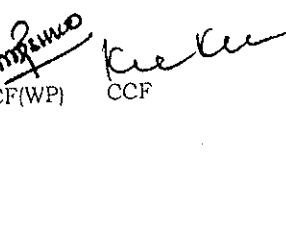
20/26 dated 21/01/2020 (with Conservator of Forests as Chairman) and Vide Notification No. DCF (WP)/Pvt. Forest/16(THC)/ 2013(WZ)/19-20/119 dated 18/06/2020 (The Chief Conservator of Forests was made the Chairperson). The Composition of the Review Committee is as follows

1. The Chief Conservator of Forests - Chairman
2. Director (survey and Land Records), - Member
3. Director (Agriculture), - Member
4. Additional Collectors (North), - Member
5. Additional Collectors (South), - Member
6. Asst. Conservator of Forests (HQ) (North), - Member
7. Asst. Conservator of Forests (HQ) (South), - Member
8. DCF (Working Plan) - Member Secretary

Criteria followed by the State of Goa .

The criteria adopted for identification of Private Forest are as follows:

- (i) 75% of the tree composition of such lands should be of Forest species;
- (ii) The area should be either contiguous to the Government Forest lands or if in isolation, the minimum area should be 5 ha; and
- (iii) Canopy density should not be less than 0.4.

 ACF (N)
  ACF (S)
  AC (N)
  AC (S)
  DIR (SLR)
  DIR (AGRI)
  DCF (WP)
  CCF

Methodology adopted and progress made in review

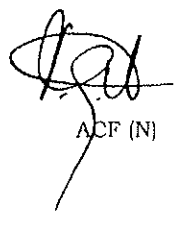
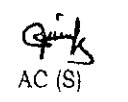
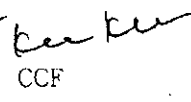
The two Forest Division Committees (North and South Goa) Thomas & Araujo committees provisionally identified the areas qualifying as private forest based on their field visits only.

Therefore, the Committee proposed the following methodology for reviewing the identified Private forest Areas by two Forest Division Committees (North and South Goa) based on the criteria followed by State of Goa using Forest Cover Maps (Canopy density > 40% & Area > 5 ha) from Forest Survey of India followed by field enumeration cum survey & public hearing and same was approved by the Government on 9.3.2020.

1. Inviting objections/ representations from landowners / affected parties etc .

The committee invited objections/representation from affected Private Forest Owners on 15.2.2020 by publishing advertisements in local dailies with due date of submission within one month's notice initially. However, due to prevailing COVID conditions, the timeline was extended from time to time to give sufficient time for convenience of affected persons for filing their representations / objections . It has been decided with approval of the Government that considering existing COVID - 19 pandemic conditions, objections received after the due date will also be considered by the Review Committee. Total objections received as on date are 8062 nos..

Data entry, sorting, scrutiny and tabulation of large number of objections received started in March, 2020 and continued till July, 2020. Additional manpower was deployed for scrutiny and tabulation of data during the period considering the huge volume

 ACF (N)  ACF (S)  AC (N)  AC (S)  DIR (DSL)  DIR (AGRI)  DCF (WP)  CCF

4 22 18
262

of information. All the objections have been sorted & tabulated and details of objections are uploaded on the departmental website for public information and also sent to Sub-committees formed in the matter/ North and South Goa Divisions for inviting objectors during field visit for enumeration and survey.

2. Digitization of Private Forest Data:-

All the Survey numbers (more than 3195 nos.) included by the two Forest Division Committees (North and South Goa) - Thomas & Araujo Committee were digitized using the Regional Plan of Town & Country Planning Department, Government of Goa and records of Directorate of Survey & Land Records Department. Considering a large number of Survey numbers to be digitised, the work started soon after formation of the review committee in January, 2020, additional manpower trained in digitisation work were deployed for work. Digitisation work was mainly affected due to lockdown and COVID - 19 pandemic conditions. However, with all efforts, 100% digitisation of all survey numbers was completed in September, 2020.

3. Superimposing on Forest Cover Maps / Classified image

As a part of approved methodology the review committee in coordination with National Remote Sensing Centre and Forest Survey of India (FSI), a high quality LISS IV Satellite image was specially analysed for preparation of Forest Cover Map as per the Private Forest criteria (*Canopy density & Area criteria*) by Forest Survey of India. Forest Survey of India was consulted on formation of the review committee and approval of methodology. However, due to COVID - 19 related lockdowns FSI could start their work on time effectively and started only in May, 2020. Satellite image of 2014-15 was used as it coincides as the mid term period of working of North and South Goa Divisions (Thomas and Araujo) committees. COVID - 19 lockdown and

ACF (N) ACF (S) AC (N) AC (S) DIR (DLSR) DIR (AGRI) DCF (WP) CCF

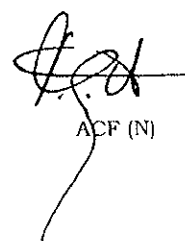
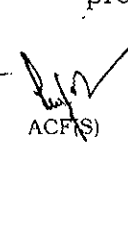
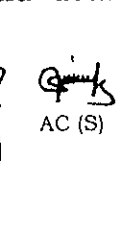
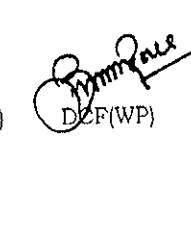
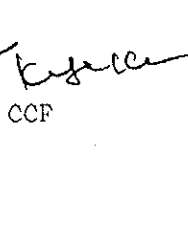
restrictions have severely delayed the preparation of special forest cover maps by FSI. The Forest Cover Map (FCM) of 2014-15 from FSI could only be received on 15.10.2020.

The Forest Cover Map (FCM) of 2014-15 prepared by FSI constitutes polygons with more than 40% canopy and area more than 5 Ha and less than 5 Ha, with later analysed for proximity to Government Forest. Digitised Survey numbers of North and South Goa Divisions (Thomas and Araujo) committees have been superimposed on FCM maps/polygons of FSI for analysis.

4. Image interpretations

Pursuant to receipt of FCM from FSI on 15h October, 2020, the interpretation work to analyze all the Survey numbers identified by the two North and South Goa Divisions (Thomas and Araujo) committees started and total work was totally completed by January, 2021, with following results.

- 183 maps are prepared of Survey Numbers qualifying area and canopy criteria (Patch Areas with more than 5 hectare & Canopy density more than 40%) admeasuring 9138 Ha (91.38sq.km) approximately and sent for ground verification & enumeration by sub-committees under supervision of concerned DCF. (*Sending of maps started simultaneously from end of October, 2020*)
- 27 maps are prepared of survey numbers qualifying area and canopy criteria (Canopy density > 40% & being adjoining Government Forests) measuring 45 Ha (0.45 Sq. Kms) and similarly sent for ground verification & enumeration by sub-committees under supervision of concerned DCF.
- Additional 82 no. of maps primarily with details of Survey Numbers, not meeting the criteria of canopy density and area as per LISS IV FCM of 2014-15, have also been prepared and details were sent to Divisions for seeking

 ACF (N)
  ACF (S)
  AC (N)
  AC (S)
  DIR (DGLR)
  DIR (AGRI)
  DCF (WP)
  CCF

history details regarding felling permission, offences, court cases if any, in those Survey Numbers etc for further analysis including google timeline analysis as per approved methodology.

- After receipt of this information from Divisions, analysis on Google Time Series has been undertaken and corroboration with satellite based Forest Cover Map of FSI for the relevant period was done wherever required.

5. Ground Verification

Since out of the three criteria of Private Forests in Goa, the first criteria i.e 75% of the tree composition should be forestry species composition, which cannot be ascertained by using Forest Cover Map / Classified image but through ground verification only. The enumeration of 9183 Ha (91.83 Sq. Km) approximate area is being carried out by 16 Nos. Sub-committee consisting of Range Forest Officers of Forest Department, Inspector of Survey and Land Records, Directorate of Land and Survey Department and Village Talathi of Revenue Department, which are working under direct supervision of concerned territorial DCF.

Details of provisionally identified survey numbers for review

Particulars	North Goa	South Goa	Total	Remark
Total Survey Numbers identified as Private Forests	792	2403	3195	
Survey Numbers Qualifying as Per LISS IV FCM of FSI with area	568 (2233 Ha)	1265 (6950 Ha)	1833 (9183 Ha)	To be reviewed through Field enumeration, surveying and public hearing etc

ACF (N)

ACF(S)

AO (N)

AC (S)

DIR (LSR)

DIR (AGRI)

DCF(WP)

CCF

257

**BEFORE THE GOA STATE INFORMATION COMMISSION,
Kamat Towers, Seventh Floor, Patto Plaza, Panaji Goa**

APPEAL No. 79/2025/SCIC/1108

Mr. Ganpat Sidhaye
H. No.45, Matavwado, Britona,
Bardez-Goa

..... Appellant

V/s

1. The Public information officer,
The Dy. Conservator of Forest
Working Plan Division, Panaji Goa.

2. The Public information officer,
The Dy. Conservator of Forest
North Goa Division, Ponda Goa.

..... Respondents

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONOUR

1. I, Nandakumar E. Parab, Public Information Officer cum Deputy Conservator of Forests, Working Plan Division, Panaji Goa, do hereby submit as follows;
2. It is stated that the Appellant filed an RTI application under Section 6(1) of the RTI, Act, 2005 on 11/11/2024, before the Public Information Officer, O/o Chief Conservator of Forests ,Working Plan Division, Panaji, Goa to seek the following information.
 - I. Inspection and issue of plans pertaining to private forest in village Penha de Franca, Bardez Taluka identified by Sawant Karapurkar committee including adjoining survey number identified by Deepshikha Sharma committee and notified by the government in the office Gazette series II No. 25 dated 22/09/2022.
 - II. Inspection and issue of plans pertaining to private forest in village Penha de Franca provisionally identified by Thomas committee as private forest and accepted as qualified by Review committee headed by chief Conservator of Forest Goa notified vide number DCF(WP)PVT. For/16(THC) 2013(WZ)/19-20/119 Dated 18/06/2020 in their part final reports uploaded on Forest Department site excluding area given under Para -1

958

22

III. Inspection and issue of parameters as recorded by field and office team of the review committee which were considered for deleting survey numbers pertaining to private forest in village Penha de Franca provisionally identified by Thomas committee as private forest and not accepted as qualified by Review committee headed by chief Conservator of Forest Goa notified vide number referred in para 2 above in their part final reports. (For example, if sur. No 184 is not qualifying as private forest canopy density, area and forestry tree species noted and verified by concern teams may be furnished). The copy is enclosed as **Annexure-I**.

3. It is stated that, the information requested by the Applicant/Appellant with respect to point No (I) mentioned above, is related to Survey numbers provisionally identified by Sawant and Karapurkar Committee. Since this fall under the jurisdiction of the PIO cum Dy. Conservator of Forests, North Goa Division, Ponda, the application was transferred to his office vide letter No. DCF (WP)/RTI-105/2024-25/765 dated 20/11/2024 (**Annexure-II**). Regarding information for point No. (II), the appellant was informed that the review of provisionally identified Private Forest survey numbers is in progress. Concerning to point No. (III), the applicant was informed vide letter No. DCF (WP)/RTI-105/2024-25/766 dated 20/11/2024 to visit this office on any working day (**Annexure-III**).

4. It is to state that, in continuation to the application dated 11/11/2024, the applicant vide letter No Nil. dated 18/12/2024, requested additional information for survey numbers 46, 110, 114, 115, 116, 133, 134, 135, 139, 140, 146, 147, 149, 150, 151, 181, 182, 183, 184, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191 and 52 (part) of Penha de Franca village of Bardez taluka (**Annexure-IV**).

5. It is stated that, the Applicant visited this office on 07/01/2025 for inspection of file to verify the information sought regarding point No. (III) of his application dated 11/11/2024. Upon verification and inspection of the available record, the applicant further requested to provide FSI data for survey numbers pertaining to Penha De Franca village vide letter dated 07/01/2025 (**Annexure-V**).

6. It is stated that, in response to his communication dated 07/01/2025, the Respondent informed the appellant vide letter No. DCF (WP)/RTI-105/2024-25/1041 dated 30/01/2025 that the Forest Cover Map has been prepared on composite basis by Forest Survey of India. As many survey numbers in the sought map are yet to reviewed by the Review Committee, the sought information cannot be provided in isolation for

223 257

reviewed survey number, alone as mother data layer, is not available with this Department' (**ANNEXURE-VI**). In addition to this, review work of Private Forest is under process and still under examination. The final decision has not yet been made by the Review Committee w.r.t. survey numbers involved of Village Penha De Franca.

7. It is stated that the appellant preferred an Appeal before the first Appellant Authority (FAA)/Conservator of Forests vide Appeal No. 05/2025 (RTIA) dated 10/02/2025 (**Annexure-VII**) and prayed that information sought with respect to RTI application is not provided by the respondent and to direct to provide in time bound manner.
8. It is stated that the case was disposed of by FAA with a direction to the Respondent -1 i.e. PIO /Dy Conservator of Forests, Working Plan to provide the relevant communication dated 31.01.2025, and accordingly, the same information was furnished immediately after the hearing before the FAA to the Appellant on same day 20/02/2025.
9. It is stated that the appellant approach the Goa State Information Commission vide his Appeal No. 79/2025/SCIC/1108 dated 30/04/2025. It is to clarify that the forest cover Map (FCM) of 2014 -15 prepared by FSI for whole State of Goa on request of the Forest Department. The FCM shared with the department is not available in public domain and is protected under the intellectual property law. So, the question of denying the information intentionally by the Respondent -1 does not arises. Further, to inform this Authority that the review work pertains to identification of Private Forest completed till date, in State of Goa by the Review committee-II has been published, and made available to the public on Forest Department website. So, the Appellant may collect the available information and may use the same directly.

In view of the above facts, it is hereby prayed that the Appeal filed by the Appellant be dismissed with no costs.

Shri. Nandakumar E. Parab, IFS
Deputy Conservator of Forests &
Public Information Officer,
Working Plan Division,
Panaji-Goa.

Place : PANAJI

Dated: 21/05/2025