MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE MAHARASHTRA FOREST DEPARTMENT AND THE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION TRUST, MUMBAI

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is made on the 13th day of Dec. 2022 between

THE Maharashtra Forest Department through the Chief Conservator of Forests (Territorial), Kolhapur having office in Chief Conservator of Forest (Territorial) Kolhapur and

The Conservator of Forests and Field Director Sahyadri Tiger Reserve having office in Conservator of Forests & Field Director Sahyadri Tiger Reserve, Kolhapur (hereinafter together referred to as MFD which expression, unless repugnant to the context and meaning thereof, shall deem to include its heirs, executors, administers and assigns of the FIRST PART,

AND

THE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION TRUST, Mumbai, a trust registered under the Bombay Public Trusts Act, 1950, through its President, having office at 11th Floor, Mafatlal Centre, Nariman Point, Mumbai 400 021 (hereinafter referred to as WCT), which expression, unless repugnant to the context and meaning thereof, shall deem to include its heirs, executors, administers and assigns of the SECOND PART.

WHEREAS the MFD desires to encourage generation of scientific knowledge related to tigers and its habitats including its co-predators, prey base and key associated wildlife corridor areas for improved management and conservation of wildlife as well as related capacity building of stakeholders in Territorial and Wildlife Divisions of Kolhapur Forest Circle

AND WHEREAS WCT desires to assist the MFD for generating scientific knowledge and carry out related capacity building of the stakeholders for the purpose improved management and conservation of wildlife in the Kolhapur Forest Circle using its own resources including but not limited to their team of trained wildlife biologists and experts.

MFD and WCT held a meeting on 06/12/2022 to discuss the proposed plan of action and outcomes foreseen through this collaboration. Based on the outcomes expected at this meeting, this MoU is being signed with additional activities designed to help improve co-ordination between both parties to achieve the larger goal of effective science-based management and conservation of wildlife.

THEREFORE, both parties will collectively engage themselves as contained herein:

Conservator of Forests & Field Director • Sahyadri Tiger Reserve, Kolhapur •

Date 13/12

FD STR Kolhapur

Objectives of the Project

1.1 Assess the minimum population (& habitat-use) of the tiger, leopard, dhole, and sloth bear in the notified and approved Conservation Reserves (CRs), including neighbouring forest areas as per NTCA Phase IV protocols.

1.2 Assess an index of abundance of major prey species in CRs

1.3 Understand bottlenecks in movement of large carnivores, especially crossing points along linear infrastructure using a road ecology framework in and around CRs

1.4 Understand breeding areas for large carnivores (evidence of cubs/pups)

1.5 Assess biotic pressures and anthropological disturbance in the forest areas of CRs

1.6 Train frontline forest staff in scientific monitoring protocols such as camera trapping, data management

1.7 Incorporate the above scientific information to demarcate and prepare an indicative plan for the corridor in the Tiger Conservation Plan (TCP) of Sahyadri TR (2023-24 to 2032-33), as well as the Management Plans of respective Conservation Reserves.

2. Duration of the MoU

2.1 This memorandum of understanding shall remain effective for a period of two years from the date of signing (2022-2024).

2.2 After review of projects taken up consequent to this MoU, both parties may extend its operation for another term with prior approval of the Chief Conservator of Forests (Territorial), Kolhapur and Conservator of Forests and Field Director, STR.

2.3 The Chief Conservator of Forests (Territorial) Kolhapur or Conservator of Forests and Field Director, STR may terminate this MoU prior to the end date with understanding of the WCT.

Geographical location & Area of Study: Corridor forest area between STR and nearest source population of tigers (i.e. Tillari CR). This includes Conservation Reserve areas in the Forest Circle of Kolhapur and areas adjoining the Conservation Reserves managed by the Territorial Divisions of Kolhapur Forest Circle.

3. Responsibilities of the MFD

3.1 The MFD through the CCF (Territorial), Kolhapur will arrange for field support and access to the study areas in the forest and in terms of accommodation facilities as per availability at the field sites within the said area.

3.2 The MFD through the CF and Field Director, Sahyadri TR shall provide 300 camera traps, 600 memory cards, consumables such as 5000 AA batteries, and 2 external Hard Disks for this study. These would be used in the field by WCT researchers along with Forest Department staff and handed over to the office of the CF and Field Director, STR upon completion of the study.

3.3 The MFD will nominate the DFO Vigilance as a nodal officer for the Kolhapur Territorial Circle and the Deputy Director, Sahyadri Tiger Reserve as a nodal officer for the Wildlife Wing to coordinate the project activities with WCT representatives.

3.4 The MFD will nominate its officers and staff as well as other stakeholders to participate in the capacity building programs taken up under this MoU. MFD will also arrange participation of concerned forest staff in all aspects of monitoring in the specified area. The responsibility of the safety of the camera-traps during the study, and any proceedings as a consequence of unforeseen circumstances such as theft, breakage etc lie with the MFD.

3.5 Logistical arrangement of training workshops will be the responsibility of the concerned Range Officer and the MFD.

3.6 The MFD shall carry out review of activities envisaged under this MoU at least once a year and facilitate effective coordination for the purpose of this MoU.

Conservator of Forests & Field Director • Sahyadri Tiger Reserve, Kolhapur •

4. Responsibilities of the Wildlife Conservation Trust (WCT)

4.1. WCT will nominate one nodal contact person for the Forest Circle Kolhapur. This nodal contact person will closely liaise with the respective Conservators of Forests and nodal Divisional Forest Officer and Deputy Director, Sahyadri TR for the project activities.

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4.2 WCT will also nominate one staff to co-ordinate data sharing and results dissemination in a timely manner to Maharashtra Forest Department.

4.3 WCT will disseminate results in a timely manner to the office of the Chief Conservator of Forests (Territorial) and the Conservator of Forests and the concerned Divisional Forest Officers.

4.4 WCT will liaise closely with concerned Deputy Conservator of Forest/Divisional Forest Officers and Range Forest Officers at the time of field work to update them about the commencement and conclusion of field activities.

4.5 WCT will carry out capacity building of frontline staff during fieldwork and make all necessary logistic arrangement for the same.

4.6 WCT will provide necessary financial support, trained human resources and required equipment (other than that mentioned in Section 3) including transportation for implementing the projects and associated field work approved under this MoU. The MFD shall not be responsible for meeting project-related expenses including those on travel and field support for the WCT project staff involved in field work.

4.7 WCT will carry out analysis of collected data and share results with the MFD at mutually agreed time intervals not exceeding six months and at the end of the Projects.

4.8 WCT will also maintain copies of the data for backup purposes on their servers for access in future by Maharashtra Forest Department if required.

RESOURCE	REQUIRED FROM CF (WL) & FD, STR	REQUIRED FROM CCF (T)	AVAILABLE WITH WCT
CAMERA-TRAPS	300 UNITS		40 UNITS
BATTERIES	5000 UNITS		800 UNITS
MEMORY CARDS	600 UNITS		40 UNITS
EXTERNAL HARD DISKS	2 UNITS OF 2TB EACH		1 UNIT
FIELD VEHICLE			AVAILABLE
PERMISSION	MoU	MoU	
FIELD IMPLEMENTATION AND LOGISTICS	SUPPORT FOR TRAINING	STAFF SUPPORT, EQUIPMENT SAFETY AND REST HOUSES	FUNDING SECURED FOR STUDY FOR FIELD TEAM & VOLUNTEERS

Conservator of Forests & Field Director
Sahyadri Tiger Reserve, Kolhapur
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5. Deliverables and Outputs

5.1. Deliverables and outputs under this MoU shall be as follows:

A. Data and information to be used for Indicative Plan for the corridor of the Sahyadri TR TCP (2023-24 to 2032-33) & Management Plans of respective Conservation Reserves.

B. A report with:
I. Photo album of all captured individuals
II. Habitat-use assessment of each species (Density estimate where possible)
III. Bottlenecks & crossing points identified along major linear infrastructures
IV. Breeding areas identified with cubs/pups

V. Assessment of biotic disturbance and resource dependency of local people using camera-trap photos

C. Training of 300 staff of CRs and adjacent forest areas in camera-trap monitoring/ sign surveys/ data management and wildlife monitoring during daily patrolling shall be accomplished in the duration of this MoU

D. Raw data shared with individual Ranges and with the respective DCF/DFO office

5.2. The reports prepared by WCT under this MoU to be submitted to the Chief Conservator of Forests (Territorial) and the Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) with a copy to the concerned Deputy Conservator of Forests and Divisional Forest Officer.

6. Terms and Conditions

6.1. The WCT shall be responsible for all financial expenditure incurred under this MoU or any project under the same. Support of the MFD will be limited to as specified in section 3 of this MoU.

6.2. The WCT shall provide to the MFD all information, data, report, etc., generated out of activities under this MoU or any project there under.

6.3 The WCT or any of his personnel will not start any other research project within this project.

6.4 The WCT will share live data of camera trap with local RFO day-to-day if required by the local officer for immediate mitigation of man-animal conflict.

6.5 The camera trap photos should have date and time stamping on it.

6.6 Raw data collected by WCT during the project should be submitted to the MFD, monthly and at the end of the study.

6.7 All reports under the project shall carry the logo of both the MFD and WCT. Persons authorised by the Chief Conservator of Forests (Territorial) and Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) to participate in the research projects may be included as co-authors as per accepted norms with their respective affiliations for the purpose of publications and other outputs as consequent of this MoU or its project.

6.8 The WCT undertakes to carry out the assignment in accordance with the highest standard of professional and ethical competence and integrity, having due regard to nature and purpose of the assignment. The WCT shall also ensure that its project staff perform their services and conduct themselves accordingly. The WCT and its employees or any person engaged in any activity under this MoU or any project there under shall observe and be responsible for ensuring compliance of provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, Indian Forest Act, 1927, the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 and any laws applicable and in force in the study area.

Conservator of Forests & Field Director
Sahyadri Tiger Reserve, Kolhapur

6.9 The WCT unconditionally and irrevocably agrees that neither WCT nor any person engaged by it shall have any claim against the MFD in respect of any wages, salary, damages or any other purpose on account, compensation and any statutory benefits due/payable on any account of being engaged by the WCT for the purpose. The WCT shall indemnify, defend and hold the MFD not liable against any and all proceedings, actions and third-party claims for any cost, compensation in this regards.

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7. Institutional Representatives

7.1 The Conservator of Forests & Field Director, STR and Chief Conservator of Forests (Territorial), Kolhapur and the President, Wildlife Conservation Trust, Mumbai, will be institutional representatives of respective parties for making amendments, deletions and additions to this MoU with mutual consent.

7.2 Any amendments, deletions or additions to this MoU with or without creation of any liability on the MFD shall not be enforced or considered valid without prior written approval of the Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), Kolhapur and Chief Conservator of Forests (Territorial), Kolhapur.

2. Dispute Resolution

8.1 All the disputes arising out of this MoU shall be resolved by the Chief Wildlife Warden (CWLW), Maharashtra State, whose decisions shall be final and binding on all parties concerned.

The parties have signed this Memorandum of Understanding as a token of acceptance of terms and conditions given above, and have thus put their hands upon it with the signatures as below:

For Maharashtra Forest Department		For Wildlife Conservation Trust
Signature Shri. Ramanujam R.M. Chief Conservator of Forests (Territorial), Kolhapur Date 13.12.2022 Seal Signature: Name: Uttam S. Sawant Address: Sahyadri TR,	Signature Shri. N.S. Ladkat Conservator of Forests and Field Director, Sahyadri Tiger Reserve Date 13.12.2022 Seal Signature: Name: Uttam S. Sawant Address: Sahyadri TR.	Signature Dr. Anish P. Andheria President, WCT Date 13.12.2022 Seal In presence of Signature: Name: GIRISH PUNJABI Address: WCT