

Scientists to assess flood impacts

State-funded research institutions to collaborate on mitigation strategies

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Scientists from State-funded research institutions are putting their heads together in a collaborative exercise to assess the damage caused by the recent floods and insulate the State from future disasters.

Spearheaded by the Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment (KSCSTE), the multi-institutional project seeks to document the environmental impact of the catastrophic floods and landslips and come up with scientific interventions for the Rebuild Kerala programme announced by the government.

It will also formulate disaster mitigation strategies for the State.

Package

"We are drawing up a package of collaborative projects. All the research institutions under the council have been asked to take a look at how they can contribute to the

Project components

- Zonal-level restoration of biodiversity
- Impact of diminishing wetlands on flood control
- Impact of floods on forest, aquatic and agro biodiversity
- Harness traditional knowledge for disaster management
- Documentation of the environmental impact of floods



assessment of flood damage and formulation of strategies for disaster resilience," said Suresh Das, Executive Vice President, KSCSTE.

Data to be compiled

The council has held a preliminary round of discussions

with the Kerala State Planning Board and heads of constituent institutes.

"The priority will be on the compilation of data on the impact of the floods. This will be hosted on a common platform to enable seamless sharing of information and avoid duplication of effort," Dr. Das said.

Five components

The council has identified five project components with one institution playing the lead role in each study area.

"One of the immediate priorities for the State is to replace the natural vegetation lost in the floods and landslips. A zonal-level study will be taken up for the restoration of biodiversity. We have already started efforts to set up plant nurseries," says S. Pradeep Kumar, Member Secretary, KSCSTE.

Another project will focus on the decline of wetlands and the consequent impact on flood control.

A third project involves a study on the impact of the floods on the forest, aquatic and agro biodiversity and their role in climate change adaptation.

The fourth project to be taken up will explore the possibility of harnessing traditional knowledge systems for weather prediction and disaster management while the fifth one to be coordinated by the council headquarters will document the environmental impact of the floods.

"We are exploring the possibility of working with other agencies such as the Kerala State Biodiversity Board," Dr. Kumar said.

Role of eco clubs

"The eco clubs under the National Green Corps will also be drafted into the programme."

The projects will be taken up under the Plan programmes of the council for the second half of 2018-19 and 2019-20.