November 13th was the fifth anniversary of Conservation Assured | Tiger Standards (CA|TS). Launched in 2013 at the first Asia Parks Congress in Japan, we then had only one registered site. Today CA|TS is being implemented in 65 sites with more in the pipe line for registration over the next year. CA|TS is now set up in seven tiger range countries (TRCs): India, Nepal, Bhutan, Russia, Malaysia, China and Bangladesh. Thailand and Indonesia are due to come on board soon. Myanmar is still in the early stages of developing their tiger conservation action plan and establishing protected area monitoring, but is expected to be on the path to CA|TS by 2020.

The adoption of CA|TS among the key TRCs, setting up the CA|TS Council and backing from the CA|TS Support Group, has helped to fully operationalise the CA|TS governance system. The CA|TS Support Group¹ and wider Partnership² are the accelerators for the implementation of CA|TS to catalyse and mobilise resources for sites to achieve effective management. We are thankful to all the Partners for their continued support.

Issue 10 of CA|TS Update brings you the latest updates on CA|TS in the last quarter, news from TRCs who are implementing CA|TS, advanced notice of the upcoming CA|TS Support Group Meeting in 2019 and in our new section “From the Field” - the experience of CA|TS site assessment from one of our most experienced Independent CA|TS Reviewer from India, Mr. B K Singh.

More information on CA|TS sites and related publications can be found at: www.conservationassured.org/resources and on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/conservationassured/

¹ The Support Group: made up of international NGOs, institutions, intergovernmental organisations, non-Tiger Range Governments and donor organisations whose role is to support, promote and implement CA|TS and to working closely with government agencies responsible for tiger conservation and management. The tiger range Country Govts., IUCN, UN Development Programme (UNDP), Global Wildlife Conservation (GWC), Smithsonian, Equilibrium Research, Panthera, Freeland Foundation, WildTeam, Global Tiger Forum (GTF), IUCN-KfW, World Commission of Protected Area (IUCN-WCPA), and WWF

² The CA|TS Partnership: is a collective representation of tiger range governments, inter-governmental agencies, institutions, NGOs and conservation areas. This together forms the CA|TS Partnership. The governance structure of the Partnership includes; the CA|TS Council, the Executive Committee, the National Committee, the Support Group and the Management Team.
Quick CA|TS overview

- Seven National / Provincial / Jurisdictional Committees: BD, BT, CH, IN, NP, MY and RU
- 65 Registered Sites: Across 7 TRCs
- 4 Approved Sites: in Nepal (Chitwan NP), Russia (Sikhote-Alin NR) and India (Lansdowne and Ramnagar Forest Divisions)
- Several sites ready for final submission: from Nepal and Bhutan

CA|TS Council
The Chair of CA|TS Council participated at the “National Mini Lab on Strengthening Tiger Conservation” that took place in Kuala Lumpur in July 2018 (see below). The Council is now working on the compilation of CA|TS Country Plans submitted by the CA|TS participating countries. The final CA|TS Country Plan 2018-2022 report will be released next year.

CA|TS Executive Committee
The 11th meeting of the CA|TS Executive Committee took place on 6th September 2018. The meeting reviewed two sites for CA|TS Approved status: Ramnagar Forest Division and 24 Parganas (South) Forest Division. Ramnagar was CA|TS Approved. 24 Parganas (South) Forest Division was reverted to the National Committee (NC) for India with some actions to be incorporated into the CA|TS Dossier (the document which details compliance to the CA|TS Standards) with the request that it be re-submitted when these actions were undertaken.

TRCs working together
- Bhutan
The CA|TS assessments for the three sites Royal Manas National Park, Jigme Singye Wangchuk National Park and Jigme Dorji National Park have been completed and reviewed by the independent reviewer and submitted to the NC for Bhutan. The NC will be meeting in December to discuss the findings and next steps.

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• China & Russia
The Independent Reviewers in each of these countries are now reviewing the following sites.
  o Huangnihe Nature Reserve, China
  o Wanning Nature Reserve, China
  o Land of the Leopard National Park, Russia

• India
A total of 41 sites have been registered in India. These sites are spread over five States.
  o Chattisgarh – 4 Sites
  o Madhya Pradesh – 24 Sites
  o Maharashtra – 2 Sites
  o Uttarakhand – 10 Sites
  o West Bengal – 1 Sites

Ramnagar Forest Division in Uttarakhand State became the fourth global site and second in India, after Lansdowne Forest Division, to achieve the CA|TS Approved status.
Ramnagar is located between the Rivers of Kosi in the west and Gola in the east and administratively it comes under the district of Nainital of Uttarakhand state, India. The division is spread across an area of 487.37 km² and includes five ranges in the division: Kosi, Kota, Dechori, Kaladhungi and Fatehpur covering an area of 86.185 km², 85.424 km², 102 km², 113.9 km² and 99.857 km² respectively. The division is approximately 60 km long east to west with an average width of approximately 10 km. Five main rivers, Kosi, Dabka, Boar, Nihal and Bhakra, flow through the region as well as many seasonal and perennial streams. The area is mostly covered by moist Sal forest and mixed forests; some areas also have Teak plantations which were planted to decrease the threat of encroachments. Common trees found in this division are *Anogeissus latifolia, Terminalia bellerica, Syzizium sp., Lagerstroemia parviflora, Mallotus philippinensis, Cassia fistula Adina cordifolia* and *Linnea coromandelica.*
The geographical area is divided into rocky area, plateau region and low lying area which gets affected by floods during the rainy season. Soils are high in mineral content. This region has a diverse biodiversity including a wide range of mammals: e.g. tigers, leopards, leopard cat, jungle cat, rusty spotted cat, red fox, jackal, Himalayan black bear, bat, Indian porcupine, Indian elephant, goral, serow, chital, sambar, muntjac and Indian pangolin. The tiger density in the division is around 8 to 9 tigers per 100 km²; and the division has recorded 41 tigers in total. The division is a very important site for providing landscape connectivity and important corridors for tigers between Corbett and Pilibheet Tiger Reserves.

**Malaysia**

**First National Mini Lab on Strengthening Tiger Conservation and Protected Area Management**

The first national CA|TS Mini Lab on Strengthening Tiger Conservation and Protected Area Management was held from 18th – 19th July 2018 in Kuala Lumpur. The event that was jointly organised by the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) and WWF-Malaysia and was officiated by the Minister of Water, Land and Natural Resources, YB Dr Xavier Jayakumar. It was attended by over 60 participants from the state and federal government agencies, NGOs, corporate sectors as well as delegates from Bhutan and Nepal. The mini lab aimed to discuss the issues and priorities to strengthen tiger conservation and protected area management through CA|TS including ways to tackle the poaching crisis in Malaysia’s forests. The inaugural mini lab also served as a platform for knowledge sharing where participants were able to learn from the experience of other countries.


**Nepal**

Four key tiger sites in Nepal, Banke, Sukla Phanta, Bardia and Parsa National Parks, have completed their CA|TS assessments. The reports are being compiled and will be submitted to the NC of Nepal in early January 2019. Chitwan National Park has completed its three years of CA|TS Approved status and now being re-assessed as a part of the CA|TS re-approval process.

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CA|TS Publication
A new paper on CA|TS was published in *Land* (7, 93; doi:10.3390/land7030093). The paper describes CA|TS in the context of tiger conservation, the evolution and philosophy of the system and its application across the tiger range and drawing on lessons learned from five years of development.

Download the paper: [https://www.mdpi.com/2073-445X/7/3/93/htm](https://www.mdpi.com/2073-445X/7/3/93/htm)

CA|TS Support Group Meeting in 2019
Tentative dates: Thursday 27th – Friday 28th March 2019 or Monday 1st April – Tuesday 2nd April 2019.
Venue: London Zoo

From the Field
Mr. B K Singh, Retired Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Head of Forest Force) Karnataka, India and one of the most experienced independent CA|TS Reviewers shares his experience of being closely associated with CA|TS work in India.

The CA|TS Journey in India
National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), during past one and half decades has taken several steps for conservation of tigers in all Indian landscapes. The main steps taken in collaboration with the tiger states are upgrading the status of important sanctuaries and national parks to Tiger Reserves, intensifying patrolling in sensitive areas, relocating families from the core areas, employing special tiger protection force, monitoring the
presence or absence of tigers in core and buffer etc. With such stringent measures, tiger numbers have increased and the latest estimates show that there are more than 2,200 wild tigers in India. The presence of tigers outside Tiger Reserve was also observed.

All India tiger surveys have been conducted every four years since 2006. 70% of wild tigers found in TRCs are in India. The survey comprises of eight days’ field protocol in all forest areas followed by phase IV monitoring using camera traps. As already stated, tiger estimation figures in 2014 in India suggests that there are nearly 2,200 tigers with some 60% found in Tiger Reserves and the remaining 40% in forest areas.

CA|TS is being put in place to identify critical sites for securing tigers outside Tiger Reserves. I have been engaging with CA|TS in the capacity of an Independent Reviewer appointed by the Indian CA|TS National Committee. I had the opportunity to attend the international orientation programme organized for all the independent reviewers working across the seven TRCs, held at Bogor, Indonesia between 13th and 16th October 2017. As an independent reviewer I was part of the Indian delegation. Delegates across the TRCs are committed to take measures to march towards achieving St Petersburg declaration and using CA|TS as an accelerator and a monitoring tool.

Given the number of tigers outside Tiger Reserves, some Indian states wanted to assess the sites of the territorial divisions where the challenges are much more than those faced by Tiger Reserves. Sites came up for CA|TS assessment and NTCA, Global Tiger Forum (GTF) and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) India along with IUCN India and local experts formed the National Committee. The resources were pooled by WWF India and GTF and a panel of reviewers was identified for carrying out the site assessments. A series of orientation programmes were organized to familiarize the reviewers with the protocols and processes.

In 2015, the state of Uttarakhand started a very big programme for the CA|TS process for Haridwar, Landsdowne, Ramnagar, Terai West, Terai East, Terai Central, Haldwani and Askot territorial divisions. Along with the representatives of WWF and GTF I was entrusted with the assessment of Landsdowne, Ramnagar, Terai West and Terai Central Forest Divisions.

Landsdowne and Ramnagar forest divisions are the extension of Corbett Tiger Reserve and a spillover population of tigers have established home ranges here. The management in both the
divisions took up monitoring of large carnivores on the lines of Corbett. These sites like many others spread across the human dominated landscapes faced numerous conservation challenges. On a more positive note, all these sites were in the corridor between Corbett and Pilibhit Tiger Reserves. Managing these sites for long-term recovery of tigers was a necessity. CA|TS approval has already been granted for Landsdowne and Ramnagar divisions.

The other sites that I have been reviewing are:

- **Territorial division namely South 24 Paragana in West Bengal.** This is a site bordering Sundarbans, a famous Tiger Reserve of West Bengal. Despite a large section of communities’ dependent on forests for firewood collection, honey collection, crab collection, fishing etc, it is one of the most deserving site for CA|TS approval. The site is also a part of Sundarbans biosphere reserve and is a pride for West Bengal. The territorial division includes some sanctuaries as well.

- **Three are protected areas in the State of Chhattisgarh:** Gurughasidas National Park, TamorPingla Sanctuary and Bhoramdev Sanctuary. The first two are contiguous and provide corridor connectivity between Sanjay Dubri Tiger Reserve of Madhya Pradesh and Palamu Tiger Reserve of Jharkhand state. All the three protected areas are very important sites for wildlife conservation and are in the process of CA|TS assessment. It is important that the tiger is secured in these sites as well. Of course management has to pull up their socks in all the three cases and take proper measures to fill up the gaps in management strategy necessary to secure the sites for tiger conservation.

- **Two sites namely Central Chanda Forest division and Brahmpuri Forest Division of Maharashtra State.** Because of better protection, Tadoba Tiger Reserve of Maharashtra has been recruiting many tigers. These tigers are establishing home ranges in adjoining territorial divisions. Many of them are found in Brahmpuri Forest Division (north of Tadoba) and Central Chanda Forest Division (south of Tadoba). Given high human density around these sites the conservation challenges are huge. The protection strategy of Central Chanda division is praiseworthy, despite the fact that both the sites have some vacancies of frontline staff. Forest Corporation of Maharashtra is also working in both the sites. In the near future these sites would be worthy for the CA|TS approval.
There are many Tiger Reserves across the tiger states in India where managers are feeling pressure from the communities for ever increasing human tiger conflict. Tigers have established home ranges in forest areas (generally territorial divisions) on the fringes or adjoining areas of Tiger Reserves. Managers in the territorial divisions have also responded positively and taken action for conservation of tigers and conflict resolution. During all my visits to these sites for CA|TS assessment I have seen enthusiasm in managers in designing strategies for protection and better management of sites. They also take all necessary steps to see that CA|TS approval is granted to the sites. This way CA|TS process can help the sites in upgrading the standards to deal with the situation effectively.

Finally, it is also a high time that CA|TS secretariat organizes a workshop where reviewers can bring in their experiences and provide opportunities for other TRC reviewers to learn and share these pool of ideas to benefit the tiger management in their countries.

Photo: Ramnagar Forest Division, India.
CA|TS in News


https://www.mdpi.com/2073-445X/7/3/93/htm

https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/international-tiger-day-we-need-new-age-tiger-champions-5281375/


Photo: Ranthanbore Tiger Reserve, India.