

66TH MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BOARD

DATE : **13 February 2024**

TIME : **3.00 PM to 4.30 PM**

MODE : **Hybrid Mode**



Minutes of the meeting

Auroville Foundation Auroville

AUROVILLE FOUNDATION, AUROVILLE

Minutes of the 66th Governing Board meeting (hybrid mode) held on 13.02.2023 at Raj Bhavan, Chennai

The following were present in the meeting:

1)	Hon'ble Shri R. N. Ravi Governor of Tamil Nadu	Chairperson
2)	Hon'ble Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan Lt. Governor of Puducherry	Member
3)	Prof. Goutam Ghosal	Member
4)	Dr. Nirima Oza	Member
5)	Prof. R. S. Sarraju	Member
6)	Shri Aravindan Neelakandan	Member
7)	Dr. Jayanti S. Ravi	Secretary, AVF
8)	Dr. G. Seetharaman	OSD, AVF

Prof. Nandana G Basappa, Governing Board member did not attend the meeting.

The following Officers of Ministry of Education were **present online** during the meeting:

1. Ms. Anusree Raha, Joint Director
2. Ms. Madhu Bala Soni, Under Secretary
3. Shri Sameer Bakshi, SO
4. Shri Naveen, ASO

Dr. Jayanti S. Ravi, Secretary, Auroville Foundation welcomed the Chairperson and the Members to the 66th meeting of the Governing Board.

Hon'ble Shri R. N. Ravi, Governor of Tamil Nadu and Chairperson, Governing Board, Auroville Foundation delivered the opening remarks.

Then, the Agenda Items were taken up for discussion. The following were the decisions taken in this meeting:

Item No. 66.01	Confirmation of minutes of the 65th meeting of the Governing Board held on 12th December 2023
-----------------------	--

The minutes of the 65th Meeting of the Governing Board held on 12th December 2023 were circulated to all the Members. The Ministry has pointed out the omission of the name of Shri Sanjog Kapoor, JS & FA who attended the meeting online. No other comments have been received. The Governing Board resolved to confirm the minutes of the 64th meeting with the correction in the list of attendees as above.

Item No. 66.02	Action taken on important decisions taken by the present Governing Board
-----------------------	---

The Governing Board has taken on record the important decisions taken by it since it took office on 6.10.2021 and the actions taken/present status on the decisions.

Item No. 66.03	Secretary's Report
-----------------------	---------------------------

The Secretary presented the report on the important activities and achievements since the last GB meeting. As part of the important activities, the Secretary presented the action taken by the Foundation to clear the areas of trees and other encroachments on which roads and other infrastructure facilities are planned as per the Master Plan in the aftermath of the Supreme Court's interim order dated 13.12.2023 staying the NGT's order dated 28.4.2022. The Board appreciated the action taken in this direction and advised that the clearance activities be undertaken in one go and not in phases. It advised to carry out a large scale tree plantation drive. Secretary informed that tree plantation drive is on the cards with the active involvement of the OSD who is an Indian Forest Service Officer.

The Board advised that it was time to proceed ahead quickly with the infrastructure activities so that the city as envisioned by the Mother was realised.

Secretary informed the Board about the meetings held with Community Coordinators and also about the meetings held with the Residents and three days viz. 7 to 9 Feb 2024 which was attended by around 250 Residents on each day. The Board advised to

convene such meetings on a monthly basis to apprise Residents of important decisions, activities which will also counter the misinformation campaign by a few.

She briefed about the Prosperity Scheme under consideration of the Foundation. The Scheme is being devised with the active involvement of few Aurovilians who are running big ventures and the Scheme will be beneficial to all Aurovilians.

She informed the Chairperson that four members of the Governing Board viz. Prof. Goutam Ghosal, Shri Aravindan Neelakandan, Prof. R.S. Sarraju and Dr. Nilima Oza held day long meetings with the Working Committee, FAMC and ATDC on 12.2.2024 and she thanked them for their active involvement.

The Board noted the other important activities since the last meeting of the GB.

Item No. 66.04	Status of pending court cases
-----------------------	--------------------------------------

The Board has noted the details of the court cases pending in different courts and their status.

Item No. 66.05	Auroville Marathon and events scheduled in February
-----------------------	--

The Board has appreciated the efforts made for the revival of the annual marathon. It also noted the other important initiatives such as Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat, Sanskrit Literature Festival, Meeting on the Secret of the Veda, International Spiritual Summit, Sri Aurobindo Youth Conference – 7 Cities 7 Themes and the forthcoming events Shakthi Kumbh, Auroville Festival from 21st to 29th Feb 2024.

Item No. 66.06	Auroville Foundation Regulations
-----------------------	---

The Governing Board has taken on record the Notified the following two Regulations—

1. The Auroville Foundation (Admission and Termination of Persons in the Register of Residents) Regulations, 2023
2. The Auroville Foundation (Framework for Selection of Working Committee) Regulations, 2024

It also noted the status of the following three Regulations pending with the Ministry—

1. The Auroville Foundation: Trusts, Units and Activities, Regulations, 2024.
2. The Auroville Foundation (Development Control in Green Belt Zone of Auroville Universal Township) Regulations 2024.
3. The Auroville Foundation (Constitution of Town Development Council) Regulations 2024.

Item No. 66.07	Creation of 03 posts of DS to facilitate the appointment of Officers to handle Administration, Accounts, and Security related matters
-----------------------	--

The Governing Board has noted the creation of three posts of Deputy Secretary for the Office of the Secretary, Auroville Foundation.

Item No. 66.08	Setting up of an Integral Medical Institution in the Auroville Foundation
-----------------------	--

The Governing Board has noted the progress made in setting up of an Integral Medical Institution in collaboration with JIPMER and Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda (ITRA), Jamnagar.

Item No. 66.09	Important decisions taken by the current Working Committee
Item No. 66.10	Important decisions taken by the current Funds and Assets Management Committee (FAMC)
Item No. 66.11	Important decisions taken by the current Auroville Town Development Council

The Secretary informed that an effort has been made by her Office to compile all important decisions taken by the current Working Committee, Funds and Assets Management Committee and the Auroville Town Development Council. She apprised that it would serve as a record for posterity and for accountability. These Committees have been advised to keep proper records of decisions taken by them and also to send it to the Secretary's Office for record purposes. She further added that as the decisions taken were numerous and considering the time constraint to discuss them in the Governing Board meeting, she stated that these decisions would be examined by her Office and will be reported in the next meeting of the Governing

Board for information/ directions.

Approval Items

Item No. 66.12	Revised Annual Accounts of Auroville Foundation for the Financial Year 2022-23
-----------------------	---

The Secretary apprised the need for revision of the Accounts as per the observations of the CAG. The Governing Board approved the revised accounts for the year 2022-23 as accepted by the CAG.

Item No. 66.13	The Auroville Foundation (Residence Criteria) Standing Order, 2024
-----------------------	---

Admission and Terminations Regulations, 2023 was notified on 4.1.2024. These Regulations require the Governing Board to issue a Standing Order viz. “Auroville Residence Criteria” for residing in Auroville. Adherence to these criteria is mandatory to become a Newcomer or a Resident. Further, the status of a volunteer, newcomer, or resident can be terminated for violating these criteria.

A person who is drawn to Auroville is committing his/her life to a collective purpose; firstly to exemplify the practice of Integral Yoga, and secondly to the betterment of all of humankind; and the collective purpose is the context in which the individual’s progress is set, the disciplined adherence to the larger goals and a way of life as defined by the founders of Auroville is the starting point; therefore a guideline for life in Auroville and a code of conduct for residents need to be enumerated.

In November 2022 the Governing Board invited feedback and suggestions from all Residents on suggestions and constructive ideas regarding all matters relating to course correction in Auroville affairs, as well as criteria for residency in Auroville, and received numerous suggestions from the Residents of Auroville.

As per Section 11(3) of the Act, “The general superintendence, direction and management of the affairs of the Foundation shall vest in the Governing Board which may exercise all the powers and discharge all the functions which may be exercised or discharged by the Foundation”.

In the exercise of statutorily mandated duties of the Governing Board for the

internal management of the affairs of Auroville, for the well-being, continued, undeterred, and successful development of Auroville in the light of the teachings of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, and in the exercise of its powers conferred by the Auroville Foundation Act and in terms of the Admission and Terminations Regulations, 2023, the Governing Board has approved the Standing Order laying down Residence Criteria.

Item No. 66.14	Approval of Legal Fee payment to Counsels engaged by the Foundation
-----------------------	--

The Governing Board approved the expenditure incurred towards payment of legal fees paid to the Counsels engaged by the Foundation.

Item No. 66.15	Payment of fees to the Auditor for settling the Income Tax Demand Notice for Rs.204.71 for the Assessment Year 2022-23 (Financial Year 2021-22)
-----------------------	--

The Governing Board approved the payment of Rs.5,90,000/- to G. Sekar Associates, Chartered Accountant for setting the Income Tax Demand Notice for the Assessment Year 2022-23.

Item No. 66.16	Setting up of an Allopathic Hospital in Auroville
-----------------------	--

The Governing Board was apprised about the lack of proper medical care to the Aurovilians and accordingly an Expression of Interest was invited from Health Care providers to run an Allopathic Hospital in an existing building of Auroville. The idea is to provide free health care to Aurovilians as available under PMJAY Scheme and to allow the private hospitals to charge from other patients.

A pre-bid meeting was also held on 9.2.2024 which was attended by six private hospitals. However, there was lack of enthusiasm to the proposal in its current format.

After discussions, it was decided to explore the possibility of tying up with private health care providers at a facility just outside the Master Plan. It was also advised that in any tie-up with the private Hospitals it must be ensured that there should be involvement of Aurovilians in the manner of running the facility. The Foundation should be watchful to ensure that the motive of the private operator is not solely profit

making. Their commitment to provide best health care to Aurovilians should be protected in the scheme of things. Secretary assured the Governing Board that these issues will be discussed with the stakeholders and will be taken forward.

Item No. 66.17	Setting up of an Ayurvedic Hospital in Auroville
-----------------------	---

The GB has considered the proposal and gave its in-principle approval.

Item No. 66.18	Proposal to set up educational institutions in alignment with the Secret of the Vedas
-----------------------	--

The Governing Board appreciated the efforts initiated by the Foundation to promote knowledge on Veda. It also advised that teaching of Veda should be inclusive i.e., open to all communities and nationalities and this knowledge should not become preserve of the few. The Chairperson advised that the Vedas should be taught in Sanskrit and not in any other language as the correct intonation cannot be taught if the teaching is in other languages. The Chairperson further stated that the students who is joining to learn Vedas should also be taught science & vocational training to increase the employment opportunities. The Gurukulam for teaching of the Vedas should be appropriately named to indicate that it is an Auroville Institution.

The Secretary informed the Governing Board that the first language school that was opened by the Mother in the Auroville was Sanskrit School and she told that efforts would be made to revive it.

After detailed discussions, the Governing Board approved all the proposals viz. Vedic School; School of Applied Vedic Studies; Centre for Research & Higher Studies on the Secret of the Vadas and Integral Physical Education Centre. These institutions should be appropriately named.

Land Matters

Item No. 66.19	Approval for exchange of land for consolidation of City and Green Belt Area of Auroville
-----------------------	---

The Board accepted the recommendations of the Land Committee as recorded in its meeting held on 8.2.2024 and accordingly approved the following: -

- (i) To earmark 32.48 acres of unused land in the areas lying outside the Master Plan for exchange to get lands in the city area and the green belt area.
- (ii) 12 proposals for exchanges of lands with private landowners, to get **7.5 acres in the city area and 17.30 acres in the green belt area**. In these proposals, Auroville would **gain 9.77** acres more than it relinquishes, which is equivalent to a **monetary value of Rs.7.5 crores**.
- (iii) fencing around the city area to secure ongoing consolidation efforts.

During the discussions, Secretary thanked Prof. R.S. Sarraju who visited a few land parcels covered in the proposals to get a firsthand knowledge of the importance of the lands being acquired for the City development.

Infrastructure Development

Item No. 66.20	Status of infrastructure works awarded to CPWD
-----------------------	---

The Board noted the status of infrastructure works undertaken by the CPWD.

Item No. 66.21	Construction of 1000 dwelling units for Aurovilians through HUDCO
-----------------------	--

The Secretary apprised the Governing Board that the proposal to construct dwelling units for 1000 with the financial assistance of HUDCO was referred to the Ministry. The Ministry advised to consider execution of the project under PPP mode by availing Viability Gap Funding from D/o. Economic Affairs. The issue is under discussion with the Ministry of Higher Education and D/o. Economic Affairs.

The Governing Board noted the status.

Establishment Matters

Item No. 66.22	Consultants engaged since the last GB meeting and the duties assigned to them.
-----------------------	---

The Secretary apprised the Governing Board the need for engaging retired Government

servants as Consultants in different areas of activities of the Foundation to expedite resolution to all pending issues. She further apprised that the retired Govt. servants come with years of experience and their expertise is much needed for the Foundation in the current circumstances.

The Governing Board approved the engagement of Shri D.C. Goel, retired Spl. DG, CPWD; Dr. K. Srirangan, retired Commissioner (Planning), Delhi Development Authority; Dr. B. Ramakichinin @ Balagandhi, retired Director (Agriculture); Shri N. Candassamy, retired Assistant Engineer, CPWD and three staff viz. Shri Aravind, Ms. Vishnupriya and Shri Manoj.

Item No. 66.23	Auroville Fellowship Program under 150th Birth Anniversary Celebrations of Sri Aurobindo
-----------------------	---

The Members inquired about the purpose of engaging the Fellows. The Secretary explained the Scheme in detail and informed that the study of the existing processes in the select Units by the Fellows and implementation of the suggested changes to the processes will improve the functioning of the various units and in turn their outputs. A certificate will be awarded on successful completion of the fellowship.

Governing Board suggested that the qualifications to be a Fellow may be reduced from the proposed 10 years to 2 years.

Item No. 66.24	Approval for operation of Secretary's Office Account
-----------------------	---

The Secretary briefed the genesis of the Secretary's Account and the continued to maintain it to meet unforeseen expenditure. The Governing Board approved the maintenance of the Account.

Item No. 66.25	MoU between Department of Art & Culture, Govt. of Puducherry and Auroville Foundation
-----------------------	--

The Governing Board approved the proposal.

Item No. 66.26	Nomination of Officers/appointment of Executives for the Auroville Safety and Emergency Services
-----------------------	---

The Governing Board has approved reconstitution of the Auroville Safety and

Emergency Services w.e.f. 9.2.2024 with the following Aurovilians as Executives and nomination of two officers from the O/o. Secretary, Auroville Foundation:

Executives: -

- (i) Mr. Alok Mallick
- (ii) Mr. Giacomo Colomba
- (iii) Ms. Josephine Joyner aka Kaliananda
- (iv) Ms. Srijita Roy

Officers from the O/o. Secretary, AVF: -

- (i) Shri Koshy Varghese, Consultant
- (ii) Shri A.V. Mathi, Consultant

The Board has also noted the roles and responsibilities of the AVSES. The Board has also approved that the AVSES will be directly reporting to the O/o. Secretary, AVF.

Item No. 66.27	Approval for the construction of a Dog Shelter
-----------------------	---

It was apprised to the Governing Board that the existing Auroville Dog Shelter which is a Unit of the Auroville Foundation needed to be shifted due to the construction of the VIP Road, which passes through its current location. Accordingly, there is a need to construct a new Dog Shelter. The Governing Board has considered the proposal prepared by the Auroville Town Development Council for the construction of a new Dog Shelter with the following facilities—

1. Animal Birth Control;
2. Animal Enclosures;
3. Dog Dormitory;
4. Kitchen & Food storage;
5. Visitors' Pavilion;
6. Workshop Pavilion;
7. Quarantine Building;
8. Clinic;
9. Office room;
10. Caretaker room;
11. Staff room;
12. Meeting Room;
13. Volunteers Quarters;
14. Pharmacy; and
15. Veterinary.

The Governing Board has also noted that the Animal Welfare Board of India has inspected and approved the new location and layout. The Governing Board approved construction of a new Dog Shelter at an estimated budget of Rs.1.99 Cr.

Any other item with the approval of the Chair

Item No. 66.28	MoU to be signed with IIT, Madras
-----------------------	--

With the approval of the Chairperson, the Secretary informed the Governing Board

that the IIT Madras forwarded a draft MoU to be signed with the Auroville Foundation. The Governing Board had earlier approved allocation of 105 acres of Auroville land to the IIT Madras for setting up of a Sustainability Campus. The Campus will be known as ‘Auroville Foundation – IIT Madras Sustainability Campus’ with the primary objective to promote research and allied activities on sustainability related projects.

The issue was discussed at length, and it was suggested that instead of 99 years as proposed in the MoU, the lease period of the land may be limited to 33 years as per the prevailing norms of the M/o. Education. The GB further advised that the revenue sharing should be beneficial to the Auroville Foundation and out of rentals IIT gets 3-5% should be given to the Foundation. In the management of the Campus, Auroville should have a say and the principles and Charter of Auroville should be ensured in the campus. Secretary informed that the draft MoU will be studied, and modifications will be suggested to the IIT Madras to safeguard the interests of the Auroville Foundation. The MoU after discussions with the IITM will be circulated to the Governing Board prior to its signing.

Item No. 66.29	Operational Framework of Auroville International Centres
-----------------------	---

The functioning of Auroville International Centres came up for discussion.

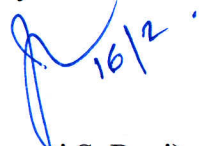
Secretary informed the Governing Board that Auroville International (AVI) has been a global network dedicated to supporting the development of Auroville. Established in 1983 and based in the Netherlands, AVI operates through 34 representations across the world. These include nine national centers, registered associations in their respective countries, and twenty-five liaisons, which may consist of smaller groups or individuals.

The representative from Auroville appointed to the AVI Board used to be nominated by the Auroville Working Committee. Their role involves advocating for the Association within Auroville and facilitating communication between Auroville and the Association.

The Governing Board noted that the establishment of Auroville International centers in various countries has largely been driven by private individuals. To ensure consistency in operations, the GB proposed that these centers formally register with the Auroville Foundation and give an undertaking to abide by the Charter, Sri Aurobindo/the Mother’s ideals, Act. The Foundation with the approval of the Governing Board may also lay down broad code of conduct and deliverables. The centres may also communicate to the Auroville Foundation providing their annual plan/deliverables for fund raising etc. The

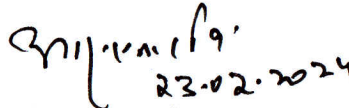
GB also proposed that the centres adopt a standardized naming convention viz. they may be referred to as Auroville (country name) Information Centre, abbreviated as AV(country name)IC. Existing centers would be encouraged to update their names and register with the Auroville Foundation.

The Meeting ended with vote of thanks to the Hon'ble Shri R. N. Ravi, Governor of Tamil Nadu and Chairperson and other Members proposed by the Secretary.



(Dr. Jayanti S. Ravi)
Secretary
Auroville Foundation

//APPROVED//



(R. N. Ravi)
Governor of Tamil Nadu
&
Chairperson
Auroville Foundation