

Sub: Proposal seeking prior approval of Central Government under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for non-forestry use of 93.58 ha of Revenue Forest Land in favour of M/s South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL) for Amgaon Opencast Coal Mining Project District Surajpur (Chhattisgarh) - reg.

Ref: Government of Chhattisgarh letter No. F-21/2018/10-2 dated 12.11.2020, received through email dated 13.01.2021

The above mentioned proposal has been granted Stage-II approval by the Central Government vide letter dated 7th August, 2020 (Pg /c) subject to fulfillment of certain conditions prescribed therein.

The State Government of Chhattisgarh, vide their letter mentioned under reference above has not requested to add additional conditions in the Stage-II approval dated 7.08.2020. Additional conditions to be stipulated in the Stage-I approval have been recommended based on the submissions made by the Nodal Officer (FCA) and PCCF (Wildlife), Chhattisgarh. Following additional conditions have been recommended to be stipulated in the Stage-I approval dated 7th August, 2020.

- (i) Wildlife Management Plan (WLP), approved by the PCCF (Wildlife) vide his letter dated 25.10.2017, shall be implemented by the State Forest Department at the project cost and differential cost of the provisions of the WLP to be implemented shall be deposited by the User Agency, as per then existing cost.
- (ii) The User Agency shall provide a vehicle (Bolero/Scorpiro/ equivalent) at the project cost to Forest Divisional Officer, Surajpur to monitor the compliances of various approvals granted under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980
 - (i) A copy of the Stage-I approval dated 15.04.2019 & Stage-II approval dated 7.08.2020 may kindly be seen at page 681/c and 859/respectively . From the examination of the said approvals, it is revealed that the no such conditions related to preparation and implementation of the Wildlife Management Plan has been stipulated by the Central Government in approvals granted under the FC Act, 1980. However, the State Government at the time of submission of proposal informed that an amount of Rs. 1,73,63,000/- 9Pg 871-873/c) has been realized from the User Agency for the implementation of the an approved management Wildlife Management Plan.
 - (ii) It may also be mentioned that condition no. xii of the environment clearance dated 2.07.2009 (Pg 865/c) also stipulates preparation of a Wildlife Management Plan.
 - (iii) Now the State Government has proposed to include an additional condition to account for the payment of differential cost of implementation of the various provisions of the Wildlife Management Plan
 - (iv) Further with regard to proposed stipulation to provide a vehicle to DFO, it is mentioned that in Forest Division Surajpur there are a number of coal mining projects which falls in Hasdeo-Arand Coalfield which have been granted approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. The area is important from wildlife and ladscape integrity viewpoints which requires regular monitoring by the State officials as well the concerned IRO of the Ministry.
 - (v) Further, it is also to mention that as per the provisions of guidelines issued on 8.08.2014 (Pg 874/c), the Central Government has restrained the State/UT Government to impose additional conditions in the approvals granted by the Central Government under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. It is also provided in the said guidelines that in case additional conditions are to be stipulated the same may be done with the approval of the Central Government.

In view of the above, it is proposed that the proposal may be submitted to the FAC for its consideration of the FAC in its forthcoming meeting scheduled for 27.01.2021
