

## **Recommendation**

The project for construction of road from Krich to SeojDhar is mostly passing through forest & wildlife areas. The area hosts a wide variety of threatened flora & fauna being continuous with Bani Wildlife Sanctuary and forests of Bhaderwah, Ramnagar & Udhampur Forest Divisions. It is worthwhile to mention here that SeojDhar area is accessible only for 3-4 months for pilgrimage/ tourist and nomadic grazers. There is no permanent settlement in the Seoj Dhar/ adjoining areas. Most of the upper reaches of the area are snow bound and remained covered with snow for most of the year. The alpine scrub beyond tree line merges in the vast alpine meadows. The rocky outcrops form the most complex and rugged ecosystems representing only the herbaceous elements. The area is dominated at top with vast alpine pastures dotted with a number of natural high altitude lakes, thus supporting the best of ecosystem diversity, values and services. The rugged landscape dotted with few high-altitude lakes& glaciers is the potential source of important river of the area like the Tawi river, Ujh River, Neeru river etc.

Moreover in present project, Diversion of 7.0425 Ha of the project area, passing through comptt. Co. 41a/D of Sudhmahadev Conservation Reserve is involved. Any Anthropogenic activity in the alpine zone of area and adjoining area shall disturb the alpine flora and fauna and may lead serious threats to the existence of glaciers, Rare endangered and Threatened (RET) flora and fauna present in Sudhmahadev Conservation Reserve including scarcity of water in the low lying areas.

The area has presence of important flora and fauna including Himalayan Tahr (Karth) *Hamitragus jemlabicus* (Near Threatened category species/Schedule-1), Musk Deer (Kastura/Rauns) *Moschus moschifera* (Endangered/Schedule 1), The Grey Himalayan Goral (Pijjar), *Nemorhaedus goral* (Near Threatened category species/Schedule-III), Serow (Urred) *Nomoraedus sumatrensis* (Vulnerable/Schedule 1), The Barking Deer (Kakkar) *Montiacus montjak* (Vulnerable Schedule I), Brown Bear (LaIbhalu or reech), *Ursoshibetanus* (Least Concern/ Schedule 1), Common Leopard (Chitra), *Pantherapardus* (Vulnerable/ Schedule 1), Red fox *Vulpusvulpusmontana* (Least Concern Schedule IV),

Himalayan Monal Pheasant (Neel) *Lophophorusimpojanus* (Least Concern/Schedule 1), Koklass pheasants (*Ceriomismacrolophus*), Western Tragopan (Mancheor), *Tragopanmelanocephalus* (Vulnerable/Schedule I), White-crested Khaleej Pheasant (Chamman), *Lophuraieucomelanos* (Least Concern/Schedule 1), Himalayan Griffon Vulture *Gyps himalayensis* (Near Threatened), Himalayn White Backed Vulture, Himalayan Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetosdephanea* (Least Concern/Schedule 1), Cheer Pheasant *Catreuswallaichi* (Vulnerable/Schedule 1).

The area sustains a healthy population of raptors and pheasants with most of the species being globally threatened. The area supports the breeding population of Himalayan Vulture *Gypshimalayensis* (Near Threatened), Egyptian Vulture *Neophronpercnopterus* (Endangered), and Bearded vulture *Gypaetusbarbatus* (Near Threatened). The pheasants include, Monal pheasant *Lophophorusimpejanus*, Koklas pheasant *Pucrasiamacrolopha* and Chir pheasant *Catreuswallichii* (vulnerable).

During joint verification it was observed that after initial 8-10 kms of the proposed road, which is passing through private land and forest area of Udhampur Forest Division as there is no permanent habitation in the area and the end point of the proposed road is not connecting any permanent habitation which has also been endorsed by the Executive Engineer, PMGSY Division Ramnagar (User Agency) vide office No. PMGSY/Drv/Rgr/4463-65 dated 28-02-2023. Moreover, terrain of the area is hilly having more than 70% slope. Thus the construction of a road in such a hilly terrain with having number of rare & endangered flora and fauna and having no permanent settlement/ habitation except movement of Kalaish pilgrims, nomads & grazers in summer for few months only may be deferred keeping in view the impacts it may impose on the ecology of the area.

Hence submitted for perusal, please.

  
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