

Proceeding of the meeting held under the Chairmanship of Sh. Kuldip Kumar, IFS, P.C.C.F. (HoFF) Department of Forests & Wild Life on 8-4-2015 at 11.00 AM in his office room at Mohali to review and expedite the clearance of RoW cases involving laying of OFC under National Optical Fiber Network (NOFN) project in the State of Punjab.

Following officers were present in the meeting.

1. Sh Sandeep Diwan, Sr General Manager (IT-BP).
2. Sh. Jarnail Singh, CCF, Department of Forest and Wild Life.
3. Sh. G. P. Singh, Sr. General Manager, M/S BBNL Ltd.
4. Ms. Ratna Thakur, Sr. General Manager, M/S BBNL Ltd.
5. Sh B. M. Setia, General Manager(BBNL).
6. Sh. Avnish Kumar, DGM(IT) BSNL.
7. Sh. Parveen Garg, SSM, DGR.
8. Sh. Gagan Goyal, Assistant Manager, Governance Reforms.
9. Sh. Mohit Saini, Assistant Manager, Governance Reforms.

At the outset, Sh. Parveen Garg, SSM, DGR gave background about the NOFN project and in 1st phase, 6024 Gram Panchayats of the State will be connected project. He also informed that that a tripartite MoU has been signed between State Govt, M/S Bharat Broadband Network Ltd. (BBNL) and DoT, GOI. For implementation of this project, the Govt of Punjab has allowed free Right of Way (RoW) with the approval of the Cabinet for laying OFCs without seeking further permissions from the various departments of the state during life cycle of the project.

During the process of implementation of NOFN project, BSNL is seeking permissions from the Department of Forest & Wild Life for laying of OFC in the areas falling under Forest land in case of 6 districts comprising 17 blocks, 191 GPs as on date. List of cases was given to the Department of Forest & Wild Life. In the process, BSNL is facing two key problems – i) procedural delays in getting permissions and ii)

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furnishing of Bank Guarantee (BG) on case-to-case basis after calculating the area and prescribed charges.

Mr. B. M. Setia, General Manager, BBNL apprised the Chair that he has also been involved in implementation of NOFN project in the State of Haryana. Haryana Govt has been giving permissions immediately where cutting of tree is involved. Regarding BG, he informed that BBNL needs to take the matter with HQ for preparation of BG on case-to-case basis and as a result it delays the approval process. He then requested the Chair for exempting BBNL, being a Government entity, from submitting BG. Accepting these two procedural changes, the Department of Forest & Wild Life, it will expedite the process of laying of OFC in the State.

After detailed deliberations on these issues, the following decisions were taken in regard to permissions from the Department of Forest & Wild Life under the project:

1. The Department of Forest & Wild Life will issue approvals within 2-3 days for the already applied cases where documents are complete comprising 17 blocks, 191 GPs under 6 districts.
2. After applying online with all relevant documents at the portal and getting permission under FCA, 1980, BSNL may start the work pertaining to laying OFC in the forest land without damaging the forest area. An undertaking in this regard for ensuring no damage to the forest area, shall also be furnished by BSNL/ BBNL to the Department of Forest & Wild Life.
3. BBNL/BSNL shall ensure that its local contractors will not do any loss at forest area when laying the OFC.

4. The Department of Forest & Wild Life will make arrangement for conducting Inspections & survey at DFO level to make the procedure easy and quicker.
5. BBNL/ BSNL shall release bank guarantee of the contractor only after completion of all formalities with the Department of Forest & Wild Life.
6. BBNL will submit a request letter to the Department of Forest & Wild Life for exempting BBNL/ BSNL from submitting BG while obtaining such approvals.
7. Regarding settlement of Forest Rights under FRA, 2006 by the concerned Deputy Commissioner, the user agency will take up the matter with DC. The Department of Forest & Wildlife has already taken up the matter with the MoEF, Govt. of India, The concerned DFO will also coordinate with the DC to issue the FRA certificate as early as possible.

The meeting ended with vote of thanks to the chair.