Office of the Divisional Forest Officer Sindh Forest Division Ganderbal

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The Addl. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests,
Nodal Officer FCA,
Jammu

No:- 2672-74/c Dated:- 07-8-2021

Sub: - Diversion of 3.1 ha (instead of 5.37 ha) of Forest Land for Lashpathri I Hydro Electric Project under forest Division and District Sindh, U.T. of Jammu & Kashmir.

Sir,

In compliance to Regional Office, Jammu's letter No. 9-JKC005/2021-CHA dated 19-07-2021, the reply to the EDS raised against Lashpathri-I is given as under :

Information required in the EDS	Reply
(i). It appears that CA scheme has been submitted for a period of 3 years instead of 10 years as provided in the relevant guideline of the Ministry. As per SFR 2019, the forest area of J&K (Combined with Ladakh) is 9.10% of the geographical area, therefore, the proposal of CA over degraded forest land does not seem to be in line with the relevant guidelines of the Ministry	The CA Scheme has been formulated as per the CA Module of J&K Forest Department which includes year wise phasing for 10 years with creation for the 1st year and maintenance for subsequent 09 years. Also in this case, a joint CA scheme has been formulated for two small hydro power projects FP/JK/HYD/47466/2020 (8.50MW LASHPATHRI-I Small Hydro Power (SHP) Project) and FP/JK/HYD/47448/2020 (9.00MW LASHPATHRI II HYDRO ELECTRIC PROJECT). As per Digest of Forest Statistics 2019 all the districts of Kashmir division are Hill Districts. The total area of Kashmir Division is 15498.00 Sq km. and the Total Forest Area is 8128.00 Sq. Km which is 50.97% of the total Geographical area. Sindh Forest Division is based in district Ganderbal. District Ganderbal is the newly carved district of J&K and it has been carved from district Srinagar. The forest cover of the district has not yet been separated from district Srinagar which gets published as part of Srinagar district in the Annual Digest of Forest Statistics report of the J&K Forest Department. The Working Plan of Sindh Forest Division is currently under revision and as per the layout exercise which is under process, the total forest area of the division is estimated to be more than 1150 Sqm which is obviously more than 50% to the total Geographic area of the district (1979 Sqm).
(ii). The DCF in Part-II has mentioned that there may not be any profound impact on the un-notified ESZ, however the better observation in this regard can be obtained from the Wild Life Department. As per details provided in the Part-II submitted online schedule-I species like Himalayan Brown Bear, Himalayan Black bear have been reported in the area. No information/comments on the likely impact of the project on wildlife (schedule-I) species and mitigative measures, if any, required to be taken, has been furnished in the proposal	The Thajwas Wild Life Sanctuary is around 1.24 Kms away from the project site. The sanctuary has good presence of Schedule-I species like Himalayan Brown Bear, Common Leopard, Snow Leopard, Musk Deer etc, These animals mostly remain restricted till the peripheries of the sanctuary and have very rare occurrence in the forests around the project. Since the project covers a small area of 3.1 Hacs. it may not have that much of profound effect on the Wild Life in terms of habitat distribution or behavior. Further there exists the Sonamarg tourist bowl which is the state land belonging to Sonamarg Development Authority and is used for tourism. This bowl acts as a buffer between the Thajwas Wild Life Sanctuary and the forest area where the project is located. The better observations in this regard has been sought from the Wild Life Department.

(iii). From the breakup of project component given under para 4 above, it may be ascertained that component of residential accommodation have also been proposed in the proposal which is not permissible as per the relevant guideline of the Ministry. No details pertaining to the requirement of forest land, if any, proposed to be involved in the power evacuation system has been deliberated in the proposal. It may also be mentioned that 2 dumping site have also been included in the proposal, however efficacy of dumping site to accommodate the muck to be generated during the construction of project cannot be ascertained for want of any Muck Disposal Plan submitted along with the proposal. Given the slopy terrain of the area, proposal deserves examination from the aspect also by the REC of the IRO	For this part, the EDS was raised with the User Agency and the User Agency was requested to clarify the requisite information as asked for in the EDS. The User Agency has cleared the EDS and has uploaded the requisite information in Additional Information of Part-I.
(iv.) Examination of the document uploaded online, especially total calculation sheet in Part-II revealed that another project of 9.0 MW titled Lashpathri-II is also proposed by the same user agency. Status of approval under the FC Act, if already obtained or otherwise, has not been mentioned in the proposal	The 9.00MW LASHPATHRI II HYDRO ELECTRIC PROJECT has also been proposed by the same User Agency. This proposal is still under the consideration of Regional Office Chandigarh and has not been yet put up in the agenda meeting.
(v). Recommendation of the UT Admin, contained in Part-V, have not been uploaded online on the PARIVESH Portal. The same need to uploaded by the state	Can be replied by the UT Administration

Yours faithfully

Divisional Forest Officer
Sindh Forest Division
Ganderbal

Copy submitted for favour of information to the :

- *APCCF/Chief Conservator of Forests Kashmir.*
- *Conservator of Forests Srinagar Circle Srinagar*

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