

JUSTIFICATION

The Public Distribution System (PDS) is a major component of Indian Food Security System the responsibility of which is shared jointly between the State and the Centre Government. The main objective of PDS is to provide food grains at highly subsidised rates to the targeted beneficiaries. The Food Godowns are the main centres to achieve this target hence, it becomes crucial to strategically locate the construction of Food Godowns. Further, with changing times, the resource of land is getting more valuable and scarce leading to, difficulty in finding a suitable general/private / State Government land, especially in prime locations.

This is, what brings this office to justifying the case of Namchi however, prior to discussing it, it may be pertinent to shed light on the demography and PDS distribution network of the concerned area. The South district of Sikkim is the second highest populated district within the State. It has a total district population of 1.47 lakhs (2011 Census). Within South, Namchi is a vibrant and expanding town with a population of about 38,750 (2011-19). Currently, Namchi has a total of 89 Fair Price Shops catering to a total of 29,352 PDS beneficiaries which comprises AAY-4325 families, PHH -14,874 individuals & OPHH- 1015 inmates/ institutions.

Coming to the point, it may be informed that during 2017, a coordination meeting was held in the Community Hall of Namchi chaired by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Sikkim. During this meeting, the HCM announced the project to revamp Namchi into a smart city and expressed the need to relocate the existing Namchi Food Godown to Dorongpani. The 500 MT Namchi Food Godown is centrally located in Namchi Bazaar, right next to the parking plaza. Due to this, the Government is of the view that the existing Godown can be relocated and other project under smart city can be initiated in the prime location. Accordingly, as desired by the Government, a proposal was drawn and submitted to the Office of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Sikkim and approval for the same has been granted.

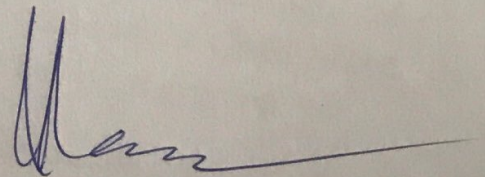
The land recommended by the HCM for construction of Namchi Food Godown measures to 0.5850 Hectares and is located at Dorongpani, Namchi where the slaughter house of Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Service currently exists. 'User Agency' for this area has already been granted to the Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Service Department (AH&VSD) by the Forest, Environment & Wildlife Management Department.

Thereafter, field inspections and numerous dialogues with the concerned departments and officials were conducted. Eventually, it was suggested by Forest Environment & Wildlife Management Department (FE&WMD), Government of Sikkim that, a transfer of User agency for, half of the area from AH&VS Department to the Department of FCS&CA may be placed. For this, as desired by the Forest Department a No Object Certificate from AH&VS Department, Government of Sikkim for 0.2925 hectares has already been obtained and submitted with other relevant documents.

The Department of FCS&CAD understands the importance of conservation of forest land especially, at this day and age but, the concerned authority may take note, the area requested for construction of Food Godown is an area for which, user agency is already granted to the Department of AH&VS and they have provided certificate wherein, it is stated that they have no objection if half of this area is used for construction of Food Godown subject to the views of the Forest Department.

Further, the project proposal for construction of 700 MT Namchi Food Godown at an estimated cost of Rs.2.95 crore has already been sanctioned by the Ministry of Food & Public Distribution, Government of India and Rs.1.48 crore has already been released as the first instalment with the direction to complete the work by March 2020.

Investment of funds on infrastructure that caters to the public would go to waste if the land or area selected is not ideal. Hence, with these insights on the issue, it is hoped that the authority concerned feels the proposal is truly justified and, sees this as an opportunity to make a contribution in favour of the public.



Secretary
Food CS & CA Department