

## Justification for Locating the Project Activities in the Forest Land

Raniganj Coal Bed Methane (CBM) Block:RG(East)-CBM-2001/1, with an area of 500 km<sup>2</sup> spreads in three districts namely Burdwan, Bankura & Birbhum. The CBM block for exploration and production of CBM gas has been granted by Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG). The major portion of the block falls in the Burdwan Dist. The forest area is nearly 40% of the CBM block area. CBM drilling and production sites are located based on the assessment of CBM Gas content in the coal seams, depth of coal seams and the area of drainage for extraction of CBM gas. The Coal Bed Methane sites are located outside/ adjacent to the forest area. Directional and Horizontal drilling is carried out from the private land adjacent to forest to extract the CBM gas available underneath the forest. Such way, the direct use of forest land is minimized. The approval for drilling of 160 Directional and 100 Horizontal wells to reach the resources beneath the forest has been granted by Ministry of Environment and Forests (Eastern Region), Govt. of India vide letter no.5-WBB066/2014-BHU dated 15.04.2014. Though the use of forest land has been avoided for locating CBM well sites, laying of pipelines & approach roads interconnecting these well sites for transportation of CBM gas and produced water is ineluctable in the forest land. The pipelines (1m width for diversion) will be laid along the existing forest roads/inspection paths along the Right of Way. In specific cases like wherever the access to the CBM well sites is not available, the new approach/access paths (6m width for diversion) will be laid from the existing forest road branching to proposed CBM well sites. We undertake not to cut any trees for laying pipelines and access roads. In addition to laying of pipeline and access roads, the existing forest roads will be used for transportation of men and machinery for drilling activities. These roads need to be strengthened to accommodate the drilling machinery wherever required. The existing forest roads will be will be strengthened, repaired and maintained by Essar Oil Limited (User agency) at our own cost as per the guidelines prescribed by the Forest Department/MoEF. The proposed activities are linear in nature (pipeline and access roads). The location of these activities are inevitable in the forest land and is the barest minimum land (18.4321 ha) which has been proposed for diversion. The alternative routes have been examined. There are no alternate routes available except to create a new access. Hence the usage of existing forest roads is maximised to minimise the new access roads.

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> August, 2014

Place: Durgapur

  
(Authorized Signatory)

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