

## Site Inspection Report

### Name of the Proposal:

Diversion of 230.780 ha. of Forest land (Protected Forest – 63.930 ha. and Rev. Forest – 166.850 ha) for coal mining in Bhatgaon UG mine of SECL, Bhatgaon Area, in Surajpur District of Chhatisgarh.

### Inspection done by:-

Officials from the Regional Office:

1. Shri S. Senthil Kumar, IFS, DDG, IRO (MoEF&CC, Nagpur).
2. Shri C.B.Tashildar IFS, AIGF (C) (MoEF &CC, Nagpur).

Officials from the State Forest Department:

1. Shri Pankaj Kamal, DFO, Surajpur.
2. Shri Umesh Kumar Vastrakar, RFO, Surajpur.

Officials from user agency:-

1. Shri Arvind Kumar Jha, GM(Opm.)
2. Shri B. R. Bishnoi, Sub Area Manager
3. Shri A. K. Singh, NO(F)
4. Shri R. P. Soni, Survey Officer.

As the proposal is a mining related project and as per the provision of sub rule 10(2) and (4) of the VSS Rules, 2023, the forest land proposed for diversion was inspected on **12.12.2024**.

### (I) Brief note on the project:

The proposal has been initiated by M/s SECL, Bhatgaon Area for seeking approval under Section -2 of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980. The project involves diversion of 230.780 ha. Forest land under section -2 of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 for coal mining in Bhatgaon **underground (UG) mine** of SECL, Bhatgaon Area in Surajpur District of Chhatisgarh in villages of Bhatgaon, Telgaon, Dugga, Baraudhi, Bisahi and Kapsara.

The Bhatgaon underground Project was sanctioned by the Govt. in Dec' 1974 for a coal production capacity of 1.00 million ton per annum to meet the energy demand of power grade coal. The construction of the project was started in April 1975. As per original project report, the construction was scheduled to be completed in 6 years' time, i. e. by 1980-1981. However, the same was delayed and the project could produce only 0.24 million ton of coal in 1982 -83. Project report was again revised in January 1984 for 0.6 MTY.

### (II) Justification for selection of the proposed site:

As informed by the User Agency, the location of coal projects depends upon availability of coal in the area. Though Govt. land and tenancy land has been taken for this project, 230.780 ha. of Forest land (Protected Forest – 63.930 ha. And Rev. Forest – 166.850 ha) is also required for this project.

### (III) Details of the forest area proposed for diversion:

- (a) Legal status of the forest land proposed for diversion: Protected Forest & Revenue Forest.
- (b) Component wise breakup of the land proposed for diversion:

Sl No	Particulars	Compt No	Area in ha
1	Underground Coal Mining	P- 1692	63.930
		Rev. forest	166.850 ha

**(c) Wildlife: Whether forest area proposed for diversion is important from wildlife point of view or not:**

The State Government has informed that, the forest area proposed for diversion is not part of any National Park/Sanctuary. Further, it was reported that that the proposed forest area is away of 15.20 KM from Tamor Pingla Wildlife Sanctuary. During inspection, no wild animals were seen.

**(d) Vegetation –**

The State Government has mentioned that no tree felling is required as coal mining is carried out by underground method.

The predominant species are Mahuaa, Bija, Saal, Mango, Saza, Jamun, Arjun, Karanj, Chhind, Bhelwa, Jatropha, Amla, Chhar, Tendu, Gulmohar, Kumhi, Neem, Semal, Palash, Kadam, Bamboo, Neelkanthi etc.

During inspection, aforesaid species of trees were found.

**(e) Effect of removal of trees on the general ecosystem in the area:**

The proposed area for diversion is having vegetation. But it doesn't require felling of trees due to underground mining. Hence, there will be no adverse impact on the ecosystem of the area.

**(f) Details of any, protected archaeological/heritage site/defence establishment or any other important monument located in the area if any –**

As reported, no protected archaeological/heritage site/defence establishment or any other important monument is located in the area.

**(g) Comment as to the reasonability of the extent of the forest land proposed for diversion:**

The User Agency already possesses a valid mining lease. However, forest clearance for an area of 230.780 ha. of forest land is proposed for diversion. The User Agency informed that location of coal mining projects depends upon availability of coal in the area. Coal mining is a site-specific activity. The deposits of coal are present underneath forest land in the Surajpur district. Occurrence of coal in the Bistrampur Coalfield was first reported in the year 1848. M/s TISCO carried out exploratory work in 1945-1948. The Indian Bureau of Mines was first entrusted by NCDC to carry out proving of the block. IBM undertook drilling in 1958 and 1959. Further drilling was done by NCDC in 1963 and total no. of 73 boreholes were drilled by NCDC. Further drilling was carried out by CMPDI Regional Institute – IV for identifying non coal bearing area.

**(h) Whether any work in violation of the Act or guidelines issued under the Act has been carried out:**

During the site visit, no work in violation of Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhinyam, 1980 has been noticed from the User Agency. However, the entire area is found to be encroached on surface with habitations and agricultural activity.

**(i) Whether proposal involves rehabilitation of displaced persons. If yes, whether rehabilitation plan has been prepared by the State Gov. or not. Details to be furnished specifically if rehabilitation plan would affect any other forest area by trans- locating outside in and around the said forest:**

Proposal involves rehabilitation of displaced persons. User agency informed that rehabilitation is carried out as per R & R policy of Coal India Limited applicable at that time. So far

approximately 653 families, having tenancy land, have been identified for rehabilitation. Total tenancy land acquired is 589.580 ha. and number of land owners is 1646. Total employment to be provided to land outsees identified is 1089. Process of disbursement of land compensation and employment is under process.

**(j) Reclamation Plan:**

Bhatgaon project is underground mining project. As informed by the User Agency, the reclamation shall be carried out as per approved mine closure plan.

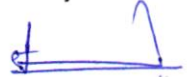
**(IV) Compensatory afforestation:**

Not applicable.

**Recommendation:**

The proposal may be recommended subject to the following:

1. No tree felling shall be carried out within the forest area proposed for diversion.
2. Encroachments on the surface may be appropriately dealt under the relevant Rules by the State Govt.



**( C.B.Tashildar )**  
AIGF (Central)

Regional Office, MoEF &CC, Nagpur.

**Proposal No.: FP/CG/MIN/39553/2019**

**Recommendations of the DDGF (Central) Regional Office, MoEF&CC, Nagpur along with detailed reasons:**

The proposal is recommended subject to the following:

- (i) No tree felling shall be carried out within the forest area proposed for diversion.
- (ii) Encroachments on the surface may be appropriately dealt under the relevant Rules by the State Government.



**~~(Dr. S Senthil Kumar)~~**  
DDGF (Central)  
Regional Office, MoEF &CC, Nagpur.



**Photographs**



Pillar No. 66 at Comp. No. 1692



Encroachments on the surface are seen in the background



