

भारत सरकार
पर्यावरण वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय
उप – कार्यालय,
अरण्य भवन, नार्थ ब्लॉक,
सेक्टर –19, नया रायपुर, अटल नगर
छत्तीसगढ़ – 492002
ईमेल– iro.raipur-mefcc@gov.in



GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS &
CLIMATE CHANGE
SUB –OFFICE
ARANYA BHAWAN, NORTH BLOCK, SECTOR-19,
NAYA RAIPUR, ATAL NAGAR, CHHATTISGARH - 492002
Email – iro.raipur-mefcc@gov.in

File No. FC- MISC./04/2023/IROCH-RPR/1528

Date:-01/12/2023

To
The Dy. Director General (Central)
Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change
Regional Office,
Ground Floor, East Wing, New Secretariat building,
Civil line, Nagpur-440001.

Sub: **Proposal for diversion of 0.093 ha of forest land in favour of M/s South Eastern Coalfield Limited for Dipka Opencast Coal Mining Projects SECL Korba in Katghora Forest Division in Korba District Chhatisgarh– reg.**

Ref: MoEF&CC, FC-Division, New Delhi, letter No. 8-78/2006-FC (Pt) dated 06/09/2023.

Sir,

On the above subject and reference it is submitted that inspection of the area proposed for diversion was carried out on 23/11/23 and the inspection report is enclosed herewith. Regarding other proposals of the Dipka, the compliance of conditions will be submitted by the state. However, in relation to the proposal for diversion of 206.638 ha Revenue Forest land, a report will be submitted separately.

Submitted for perusal and necessary action.

(Encl: as stated)

Yours faithfully,

Chaturbhuja Behera
1/12/23
(Chaturbhuja Behera, IFS)
Inspector General of Forests.

SITE INSPECTION REPORT BY THE INTEGRATED REGIONAL OFFICE, RAIPUR OF THE PROPOSAL INVOLVING DIVERSION OF 0.093 HA of REVENUE FOREST LAND IN FAVOUR OF M/S SOUTH EASTERN COALFIELDS LIMITED, FOR OPEN CAST MINING OF COAL IN DIPKA AREA IN KORBA DISTRICT IN THE STATE OF CHHATTISGARH

Name of the Inspecting Officer– Chaturbuja Behera, IFS, IG (Forest), Sub-Office, Raipur

Site inspection of the above mentioned proposal was carried out on 23.11.2023 with the officials of the User Agency. The following Officers were present during the inspection:

1. Shri. P Mukherjee, General Manager (Operation), SECL Dipka
2. Shri. Naresh Prasad, Staff Officer (P&P), SECL Dipka
3. Shri. D P Kurrey, Area Survey Officer, SECL Dipka
4. Shri. Sanoj Jose, Nodal Officer (Env./Forest), SECL Dipka.
5. Shri. Prashant Jadhav (Retd. IFS), Senior Advisor (Env & Forest), SECL
6. Shri. Jaypal Pawar, Project Range Officer, CGRVVN
7. Shri. Kamal Paikra, Patwari, Suwabhondi, Revenue Department

1. LEGAL STATUS OF THE FOREST LAND PROPOSED FOR DIVERSION

Legal status of the 0.093 ha of land proposed for diversion is Revenue Forest land. Revenue forest land proposed for diversion is a single patch at Suwabhondi village. The photo of the area is enclosed as **ANNEXURE-I**.

2. ITEM-WISE BREAK-UP DETAILS OF THE FOREST LAND PROPOSED FOR DIVERSION.

The representatives of the User Agency have informed that entire land of Revenue Forest land measuring 0.093 ha, located in Suwabhondoi village, shall be used for mining only with a view to realize the proposed enhanced coal production by the company. The patch is adjacent to the current mining area and lies within the revenue area acquired by the User Agency proposed for mining. The User Agency has already set up infrastructure for carrying out mining and no new area is required for setting up infrastructure facilities.

The detail of existing & proposed land use of Dipka Mine is as under:

S N.	Particulars	Forest land (Ha)	Tenancy land (Ha)	Government Land (Ha)	Grand Total (Ha)
1	Quarry Area*	52.889 0.093*	858.314	90.850	1002.146
2	External OB dump	54.718	125.212	26.070	206.000
3	Infrastructure, workshop, Administration building etc.,	279.242	313.518	41.114	633.874
4	Roads	0.000	4.000	0.000	4.000
5	Green belt	0.000	23.000	0.000	23.000
6	Safety Zone	22.207	85.200	22.959	130.366
Total Land (in Ha)		409.149	1409.244	180.993	1999.386

Note: * 0.093 Ha revenue forest land is proposed for expansion of Dipka OC Mines.

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3. Whether proposal involves any construction of buildings (including residential) or not. If yes, details thereof. -

No. As mentioned under para 2 above.

4. Total cost of the project at present rates:

During the inspection, representative of UA has informed that Dipka OC Project is ongoing project with total capital investment of Rs.2330.82 crores (as on 01.04.2023). Further, project proponent has informed that additional capital investment of Rs.8.50 Crores will be incurred for expansion from 37.50 MTPA to 40 MTPA with additional land of 0.093Ha.

5. Wildlife

Whether forest area proposed for diversion is important from wildlife point of view or not?

Representative from the User Agency have informed that as the area is contiguous to mining and is sandwiched between mining and habitation. Therefore, is no wildlife in the area proposed for diversion and the same has been confirmed by DFO, Katghora.

6. Vegetation:

There is no vegetation in the proposed area of 0.093Ha.

Effect of removal of trees on the general ecosystem in the area:

There is no vegetation in the proposed area of 0.093Ha. Also, the representative of the User Agency has been informed that the user agency has carried out plantation outside of the mine lease area in village Renki for greening of surrounding area in consultation with the concerned gram panchayat as well as forest department.

7. BACKGROUND NOTE ON THE PROPOSAL

The User Agency has proposed to enhance production of coal from the Dipka mine from existing level of 37.5 MTPA to 40 MTPA. Earlier, the User Agency has been accorded approval by the Central Government on 03.06.2009 (IA Division) for enhancing their production level of Dipka Mine from 20 MTPA to 25 MTPA. Subsequently, the User Agency has been accorded approval for production level of 25 MTPA to 30 MTPA by the MoEF&CC on 12.02.2013. Also, the User Agency has been accorded approval for production level of 30MTPA to 35 MTPA by the MoEF & CC on 20.02.2018 and 35 MTPA to 37.5 MTPA on 05.09.2022. So far, the user Agency has achieved the production level of 35 MTPA and has targeted for 40MTPA. During the current phase of enhancement of production to 40 MTPA, the User Agency needs an additional area of 0.093 ha of Revenue Forest land. The proposal for 0.093 Ha of Revenue Forest land is already submitted by the User Agency for obtaining prior approval of the Central Government under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

The representative of the User Agency has also informed that currently 132.781 MT of mineable reserve are available in the Dipka lease area of 1999.293 ha (as on 01.04.2023) Given the production level of 37.5 MTPA the life of the mine is 4 years.



Detail of forest existing clearance obtained by the User Agency in the past is given as under:

S. No.	Area Diverted (Ha)	FC Division's File No.	Date of Stage-I approval	Date of Stage-II approval
1	206.638 Ha	F. No. 8-80/2006-FC	20/10/2006	—
2	33.84 Ha	F. No. 8-8/2006-FC	03/03/2011	—
3	133.707 Ha	F. No. 8-78/2006-FC	20/10/2006	31/01/2022
4	15.159 Ha	Diverted in favour of NTPC (FC dated: 20.06.2004)	-	20/06/2004
5	16.794 Ha	F.No. 8C/6/591/98/FCW/78	-	11/01/2001
6	2.918 Ha	F. No.8B/115/2001-FCW/869, 03/04/2002 (Diverted in favour of STCIL)	-	03/04/2002
Total	409.056 Ha			
7	0.093 Ha	FC Reg No. 2013/028	—	—
Grand Total	409.149 Ha			

8. Compensatory Afforestation

Compensatory afforestation has been proposed over degraded forest land, double in extent (1.00 ha) to the forest area proposed for diversion, in Compartment OA-585, Rahadi village, Pali Range, Katghora Division. Since the area of diversion is less than 01 ha, CA is not mandatory. As per the guidelines, the UA can plant 10 times the trees felled, which is subject to minimum of 100 trees.

i. Whether land for compensatory afforestation is suitable from plantation and management point of view or not.

The land identified for raising CA is an area of 1.0 ha, which is in a single patch, and the vegetation density is low. The area is fit for afforestation.

ii. Whether land for compensatory afforestation is free from encroachments/ other encumbrances.

From the google map, it is observed that boundary wall and some concrete structures (*Adiwashi Gondwana Smrity Stamh*) are present in the centre of the proposed CA site. In this context, SDO Pali, has informed that plantation can be done in the empty space. Further, the DFO concerned has already certified that the land identified for raising CA is suitable for plantation.

iii. Whether land for compensatory afforestation is important from Religious/ Archaeological point of view.

The land has a religious value for the local tribals.

The User Agency has informed that CA land plantation can be done in the blank space within the CA land. Since the diverted land is less than 1 ha, it is not mandatory to have CA land. Only requirement is that 1000 plants should be planted against the diversion.

iv. Land identified for raising compensatory afforestation is in how many patches, whether patches are compact or not.

The CA land has been proposed in a single patch falling in Rahadi village of Pali Range in Katghora division of Chhattisgarh state.

v. Map with details

Differential GPS map of the area identified for CA along with its kml/shapes files has been submitted along with the proposal.

vi. Total financial outlay

Financial implication for raising and maintaining CA for 10 years is to the tune of Rs.2348209.00 as per CA scheme prepared by DFO Katghora.

9. Whether proposal involves violation of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 or not. If yes, a detailed report on violation including action taken against the concerned officials.

DCF concerned has certified in Part-II that no violation of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 have been committed by the User Agency. Demarcation pillars are standing around the area.

10. Whether proposal involves rehabilitation of displaced persons. If yes, whether rehabilitation plan has been prepared by the State Government or not. Details are furnished specifically if rehabilitation plan would affect any other forest area by trans-locating outsets in and around the said forest.

The representative from the User Agency have clarified that no rehabilitation is required in 0.093 ha of Revenue Forest land. It was also informed that rehabilitation, as per CIL R&R policy is already going on in lieu of private/tenancy land, being acquired by the User Agency for the enhancement of their production.

11. Reclamation Plan

The representatives of the User Agency have informed that reclamation of the mined-out area will be undertaken as per the approved Progressive Mine closure Plan. A copy of the same, along with the approved Mine Plan, has been submitted along with the proposal. As per detail made available by the User Agency, so far, the User Agency has reclaimed 331.92 ha biologically while an area of 427.26 ha has been reclaimed technically. Details of area excavated so far and area reclaimed, as per detail made available by the User Agency, is given as under:

STATUS OF TECHNICAL & BIOLOGICAL LAND RECLAMATION DETAILS AS ON 01.11.2023

Particulars of the lease area	Approved EMP Capacity (MTY)	C	40 MTPA
	Total area of the lease (Ha)		1999.386
	Total quarriable area of the project as per approved EMP (Ha)		1002.149
	Void to be left at the closure of the project as per EMP (Ha)		222.053
	Total Area excavated (Ha) (as on date)		745.73
Internal dump / back filled area details (in Ha)	Total quarriable area of the project as per approved EMP	D	1002.149
	Void to be left at the closure of the project as per EMP	E	222.053

	Total Area excavated (as on date)	F	745.73
	Prorata Area not required to be backfilled	$G=(E*F)/D$	165.252
	Total Area Technically Reclaimed /Back Filled	H	223
	Balance Area to be technically reclaimed / back filled	$I=F-G-H$	357.478
	Area already Biologically Reclaimed	J	127.66
	Balance Area to be Biologically reclaimed	$K=F-G-J$	452.818
External OB dumps details (in ha)			
	Total Area of External OB dump	L	206
	Area of ext. dump technically reclaimed	M	204.26
	Balance area of ext. OB dump to be technically reclaimed	$N=L-M$	1.74
	Area already Biologically Reclaimed	O	204.26
	Balance Area to be Biologically reclaimed	$P=L-O$	1.74
Total Reclaimed area (in Ha.)			
	Total Tech. Reclaimed area	H+M	427.26
	Total Biological Reclaimed area	J+O	331.92

Details and financial allocation - An amount 655.95 lakhs is allocated for Reclamation as per Mining plan.

12. Details on catchment and command area under the project.

Catchment Treatment Plan not required for instant proposal.

The representative of the User Agency has informed that a Catchment area treatment plan within 5 Km from Mining lease boundary was prepared through CGCoST, Raipur in the year 2020. (Rs. 7.16 Lakh), and for Implementation of the Catchment Area Treatment Plan, a detailed project report having a total project cost of 253.640 Lakhs has been prepared by State Forest Department. Also, it was informed that the payment of Rs.253.64 lakhs was submitted to DFO, Katghora through DD on 20.07.2023.

13. Cost benefit ratio.

Cost benefit Ratio is 1:36 as per the revised rates of NPV dated: 06.01.2022.

14. Recommendations of the Principal Conservator of Forests/State Government.

The PCCF, Chhattisgarh has recommended the proposal without any specific conditions.

15. Utility of the project. Numbers of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes to be benefited by the project.

The representative of the User Agency has informed that currently 132.781 MT of mineable reserve are available in the Dipka lease area of 1999.293 ha (as on 01.04.2023) Given the production level of 37.5 MTPA the life of the mine is 4 years. This coal will be supplied to thermal power plants and other miscellaneous consumers to meet the demand of coal in the country. Beside this, the project will also provide direct and indirect employment opportunities to the local people. The project will also enhance the economic development of the region. It is informed by the representative of the User Agency that with the commencement of the project primary and secondary employment opportunities are expected to be improved in the region. It is also expected that additional people will get employment hence job opportunities for the local people as well as immigrants from nearby areas would increase with the mining activity.



16. Whether land being diverted has any socio-cultural /religious value. Whether any sacred grove or very old grown trees/forests exists in the areas proposed for diversion.

It is informed by the representative of the User Agency that land being diverted has no socio-cultural /religious value. A certificate to this effect has also been submitted by the DCFs concerned.

17. Situation w.r.t. any P.A.

It is indicated in the proposal, that land proposed for diversion is located beyond a distance of 10 km from the boundary of any PAs. The DCF concerned has submitted in Part-II that no National Park, Wildlife Sanctuary, Biosphere Reserve, Tiger Reserve, Elephant Corridor, Wildlife Migration Corridor etc., is located within 10 Km. from boundary of the forest land proposed for diversion. Nearest PA is Lemru Elephant Corridor, which is located at a distance of about 50km from the area proposed for diversion.

18. Any other information relating to the project

- (i) SECL should make proper planning and management of top-soil so that the better plantation growth is attained.
- (ii) Plantation of species like Sal and other local species needs to given special emphasis. Steps should be taken up for soil conservation measures in the slopes and edges of dumps.
- (iii) SECL should prepare schedule to hand over the reclaimed lands to the state Forest Department.

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF IGF (CENTRAL), SUB OFFICE, MOEF&CC RAIPUR

Proposal of M/s SECL is for carrying out mining over an area of 0.093 ha of Revenue Forest land has been stated to be required by the User Agency to increase their production from existing level of 37.5 MTPA to 40 MPTA. Mining in the new area has been proposed by the User Agency to meet the demand of coal various thermal power projects. Detailed observations on the proposal have already been made in the inspection report. Given the fact that area proposed for diversion is contiguous to existing mining operation and there is no vegetation, the proposal is recommended for diversion.

Chaturbhuja
1/12/23
Chaturbhuja Behera, IFS
Inspector General of forests.

ANNEXURE-I

PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE AREA PROPOSED FOR DIVERSION



Analysis on Land under Diversion: Google Earth Imagery (Dated. 21/05/2023):

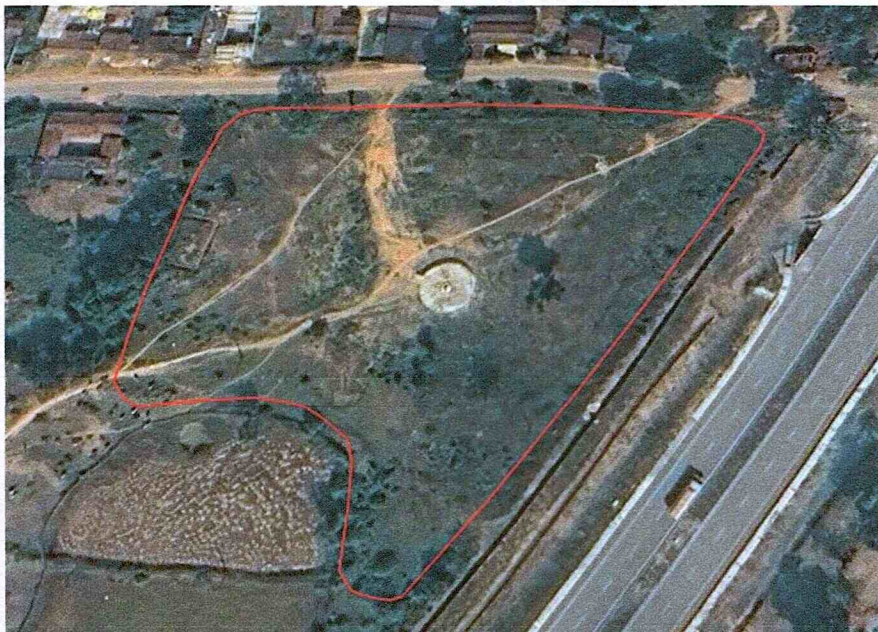


Satellite map of Proposed 0.093 ha Revenue Forest in Suwabhondi Village

Land proposed for Compensatory Afforestation



Google Earth Imagery (Dated. 24/10/2023):



Setailatte map of area proposed for Compensatory Afforestation