

08-08/2022-FC

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Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
(Forest Conservation Division)

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,
Jor Bag Road, Aliganj,
New Delhi – 110003.
Dated: 27th February, 2023

To

The Principal Secretary (Forests),
Government of Jharkhand,
Ranchi.

Subject: Proposal for non-forestry use of 855.17 ha (1006.17 ha -151 ha) of forest land for Kotre, Basantpur Open Cast Mining Project in favour of M/s Central Coalfields Limited in Ramgarh and Bokaro district of Jharkhand – regarding.

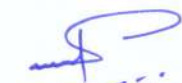
Sir,

I am directed to refer to the Government of Jharkhand's letter no. Van Bhumi-07/2022-1457/V.P. dated 24.05.2022 and letter no. Van Bhumi-06/2022-1521/V.P. dated 31.05.2022 on the above subject seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Section 2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and letter no. Van Bhumi-07/2022-2945/V.P. dated 30.09.2022 forwarding additional information as sought by the Ministry vide its letter of even number dated 22.06.2022 and to say that the proposal has been examined by the Forest Advisory Committee constituted by the Central Government under Section-3 of the aforesaid Act.

After careful examination of the proposal of the State Government and on the basis of the recommendations of the Forest Advisory Committee, and approval of the same by the competent authority of the MoEF&CC, New Delhi, the Central Government hereby accords '**In-principle/Stage-I**' approval under Section - 2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for non-forestry use of 855.17 ha (1006.17 ha -151 ha) of forest land for Kotre, Basantpur Open Cast Mining Project in favour of M/s Central Coalfields Limited in Ramgarh and Bokaro district of Jharkhand subject to fulfilment of the following conditions:

A. Conditions which need to be complied prior to handing over of forest land by the State Forest Department and compliance is to be submitted prior to Stage-II approval:-

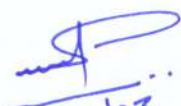
1. *Out of the total area proposed for overburden dump, approximately 151 ha area on the right side of the District boundary comprises VDF and MDF both. Keeping in view the non-site specific nature of the activity, this 151 ha area cannot be given for overburden dump. The State Govt. shall accordingly submit the revised layout plan and the mining plan by excluding the above mentioned forest area.*
2. *After excluding the 151 ha as above, the safety zone shall also be revised and adequate provision for the same will be kept in the Mining plan.*
3. *As Reported by IRO the encroachments both temporary and permanent have been observed in the proposed CA areas and there is a water body within one patch making it unsuitable for plantation. The State Govt. shall ensure to make all the proposed CA areas free from all encumbrances and submit a detailed report in this regard before Stage-II approval.*


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4. The cost of compensatory afforestation at the prevailing wage rates as per compensatory afforestation scheme and the cost of survey, demarcation and erection of permanent pillars, if required on the CA land, shall be deposited in advance with the Forest Department by the user agency. The CA will be maintained for 10 years. The scheme may include afforestation of indigenous species with appropriate provision for anticipated cost increase for works scheduled for subsequent years;
5. The User Agency shall transfer the funds towards the cost of Net Present Value (NPV) of the forest land being diverted under this proposal in accordance with the MoEF&CC's guidelines dated 6.01.2022 read with guidelines dated 19.01.2022;
6. Compensatory levies to be realized from the User Agency under the project shall be transferred/ deposited, through e-challan, in to the account of CAMPA pertaining to the State concerned through e-portal (<https://parivesh.nic.in/>);
7. The State Government shall complete settlement of rights, in term of the Scheduled Tribes and Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, if any, on the forest land to be diverted and submit the documentary evidence, along with compliance of Stage-I approval, as prescribed by this Ministry's letter No. 11-9/1998-FC (Pt.) dated 03.08.2009 read with 05.07.2013, in support thereof;
8. The User Agency shall prepare a list of existing village tanks and other water bodies with GPS co-ordinates located within five km from the mine lease boundary. This list is to be duly verified by the concerned Divisional Forest Officer. The User Agency shall regularly undertake de-silting of these village tanks and other water bodies so as to mitigate the impact of siltation of such tanks/water bodies. A detailed plan for de-silting of identified ponds and water bodies prepared in consultation with forest department shall be submitted;
9. The KML files of diverted area, the CA areas, the proposed SMC treatment area and the WLMP area shall be uploaded on the e-Green watch portal with all requisite details prior to Stage II approval;
10. The compliance report shall be uploaded on e-portal (<https://parivesh.nic.in/>).

B. Conditions which need to be complied on field after handing over of forest land to the user agency by the State Forest Department but the compliance in form of undertaking shall be submitted prior to Stage-II approval:-

1. Legal status of the diverted forest land shall remain unchanged;
2. *A proper Soil moisture conservation plan shall be prepared in consultation with the State Govt. and executed to mitigate the adverse effect of mining activities in the area. The due care shall be taken towards the rehabilitation of the local streams passing through the area.*
3. *Wildlife Management plan shall be prepared and implemented at the cost of the user agency. The approved Wildlife management plan shall be submitted and the applicable cost shall be deposited as per the guidelines issued by the Ministry in this regard.*
4. Compensatory afforestation over degraded forest land, double in extent to the forest land being diverted, shall be raised by the State Forest Department at the project cost within three years from the date of grant of Stage - II approval;
5. At the time of payment of the Net Present Value (NPV) at the present rate, the user


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- agency shall furnish an undertaking to pay the additional amount of NPV, if so determined, as per the final decision of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India;
6. The user agency shall explore the possibility of translocation of maximum number of trees identified to be felled and shall ensure that any tree felling shall be done only when it is unavoidable and that too under strict supervision of the State Forest Department;
 7. The cost of felling of trees shall be deposited by the User Agency with the State Forest Department;
 8. Trees should be felled in phased manner as per the requirement in the approved Mining Plan with prior permission of concerned DFO;
 9. The User Agency shall undertake mining in a phased manner after taking due care for reclamation of the mined over area. The concurrent reclamation plan as per the approved mining plan shall be executed by the User Agency from the very first year, and an annual report on implementation thereof shall be submitted to the Nodal Officer, Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, in the concerned State Government and the concerned Regional Office of the Ministry. If it is found from the annual report that the activities indicated in the concurrent reclamation plan are not being executed by the User Agency, the Nodal Officer or the concern Addl. Principle Chief Conservator of Forests (Central) may direct that the mining activities shall remain suspended till such time, such reclamation activities area satisfactorily executed;
 10. The User Agency shall comply with the Hon'ble Supreme Court order on re-grassing, and re-grass the mining area and any other areas which may have been disturbed due to mining to restore them to a condition which is fit for growth of fodder, flora, fauna, etc. in a timely manner;
 11. Period of diversion of the said forest land under this approval shall be for a period co-terminus with the period of the mining lease proposed to be granted under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, as amended and the Rules framed there-under;
 12. The User Agency shall obtain the Environment Clearance as per the provisions of the Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986, if required;
 13. No labour camp shall be established on the forest land and the User Agency shall provide fuels preferably alternate fuels to the labourers and the staff working at the site so as to avoid any damage and pressure on the nearby forest areas;
 14. The boundary of the diverted forest land, mining lease and safety zone, as applicable, shall be demarcated on ground at the project cost, by erecting four feet high reinforced cement concrete pillars, each inscribed with its serial number, distance from pillar to pillar and GPS coordinates;
 15. Following activities, as per approved plan / schemes, shall be undertaken in the lease area by the User Agency under the supervision of the State Forest Department. Approved scheme/plan shall be submitted to the Ministry along with compliance of Stage-I approval:
 - i. Mitigative measures to minimize soil erosion and choking of stream shall be implemented within a period of three year with effect from the issue of Stage-II clearance in accordance with the approved Plan in consultation with the State Forest Department.
 - ii. Planting of adequate drought hardy plant species and sowing of seeds, in the appropriate area within the mining lease to arrest soil erosion in accordance with the approved scheme;
 - iii. Construction of check dams, retention /toe walls to arrest sliding down of the excavated


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- material along the contour in accordance with the approved scheme;
- iv. Stabilize the overburden dumps by appropriate grading/benching, in accordance with the approved scheme, so as to ensure that angles of repose at any given place is less than 280; and
 - v. No damage shall be caused to the top-soil and the user agency will follow the top soil management plan.

16. The User agency either himself or through the State Forest Department shall undertake gap planting and soil & moisture conservation activities to restock and rejuvenate the degraded open forests (having crown density less than 0.40), if any, located in the area within 100 meter from outer perimeter of the mining lease. The plan for plantation and SMC activities shall be prepared and submitted accordingly;

17. Safety Zone Management: Following activities, at project cost, shall be undertaken by the user agency for the management of safety zone as per relevant guidelines issued by the Ministry's guidelines:

- i. User agency shall ensure demarcation of safety zone (7.5 meter strip all along the inner boundary of the mining lease area), and its fencing, protection and regeneration by erecting adequate number of 6 feet high RCC boundary pillars inscribed with DGPS coordinates with barbed wire fencing and deploying adequate number of watchers under the supervision of the. State Forest Department;
- ii. Boundary of the safety zone of the mining lease, adjacent to habitation/roads, should be properly fenced by the user agency;
- iii. Safety zone shall be maintained as green belt around mining lease and to ensure dense canopy in the area, regeneration shall be taken up in this area by the user agency at project cost under the supervision of the State Forest Department;
- iv. Afforestation on degraded forest land to be selected elsewhere, measuring one and a half times the area under safety zone, shall also be done at the project cost under the supervisions of the State Forest Department. The degraded forest land (DFL) so selected will be informed to the MoEF& CC with shape files before Stage-II approval and afforestation will be done within three years from the date of Stage-II clearance and maintained thereafter in accordance with the approved Plan in consultation with the State Forest Department; and
- v. The State Government and the user agency shall ensure that safety zone is maintained as per the prescribed norms;


18. The layout plan of the mining plan/ proposal shall not be changed without the prior approval of the Central Government and the forest land shall not be used for any purpose other than that specified in the proposal;

19. The forest land proposed to be diverted shall under no circumstances be transferred to any other agency, department or person without prior approval of the Central Government;

20. No damage to the flora and fauna of the adjoining area shall be caused;

21. The User Agency shall submit the annual self -compliance report in respect of the above stated conditions to the State Government, concerned Regional Office and to this Ministry by the end of March every year regularly;

22. Any other condition that the concerned Regional Office of this Ministry may stipulate


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with the approval of competent authority in the interest of conservation, protection and development of forests & wildlife;

23. The user agency shall comply all the provisions of the all Acts, Rules, Regulations, Guidelines, Hon'ble Court Order (s) and NGT Order (s) pertaining to this project, if any, for the time being in force, as applicable to the project; and

24. Violation of any of these conditions will amount to violation of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and action would be taken as prescribed in para 1.21 of Chapter 1 of the Handbook of comprehensive guidelines of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 as issued by this Ministry's letter No. 5-2/2017-FC dated 28.03.2019.

After receipt of compliance report on fulfilment of the conditions mentioned above, the proposal shall be considered for final approval under Section-2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. Transfer of forest land shall not be affected till final approval is granted by the Central Government in this regard.

Yours faithfully,


27/02/23
(Suneet Bhardwaj)

Assistant Inspector General of Forests

Copy to:-

1. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Government of Jharkhand, Ranchi;
2. The Regional Officer, Integrate Regional Office of the MoEF&CC at Ranchi;
3. The Nodal Officer (FCA), O/o PCCF, Government of Jharkhand, Ranchi;
4. User Agency;
5. Monitoring Cell, Forest Conservation Division, MoEF&CC, New Delhi.