

Sub: Proposal for diversion of 783.275 ha of forest land consisting of 643.095 ha of RF in Chhendipada & Kankurupal Reserved Forest and 140.180 ha of Village Forest land in Chhendipada Range of Angul Division for Naini Coal Block (Open Cast) under Angul District Odisha of M/s Singareni Collieries Company Ltd.

1. State Government of Odisha vide their letter No. 10F(Con)123/19-229/F&E dated 04.01.2020 submitted above subject proposal seeking prior approval of Central Government under Section 2 of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.
2. Proposal along with site inspection report was discussed in FAC meeting held on 21.09.2020
3. FAC after detail deliberations on the proposal with DDG Regional Office Odisha, Nodal Officer Odisha and representatives of user agency, deferred the proposal and sought following information:
 - i. The State Government has recommended the CA over degraded forest land equivalent to double the area proposed for diversion. The CA is proposed in Reserved Forests. At present this dispensation is available for proposals of Government of India and Central PSUs user agencies only. Ministry vide para 2.4(i) of comprehensive guideline dated 28.3.2019 has allowed CA over forest land not under management and/or administrative control of the State/UT Forest department and on which the provisions of FC Act, 1980 are applicable. State Government of Odisha shall explore option of finding degraded forest area outside the notified forests, in the category of area mentioned in para 2.4(i) of comprehensive guidelines.
 - ii. A coal washery has been proposed over the forest area portion in the project area. State Government shall explore the possibility of establishing the coal washery, which is a non-site specific use, on non-forest area. The alternatives explored may be submitted.
 - iii. It was noted that as per land use plan, 40.060 ha forest land is proposed to be used for establishment of washery and service building. It is to be recalled that a coal washery's requirement of water is quite substantial. In addition, there is substantial outflow of wastewater from the washery. State Government should examine on the impact of large water withdrawal from forest area for the proposed washery, as well as the waste water and dust from the washery, on the flora and fauna of the locality. Establishing such unit requires adoption of precautionary principle. All mitigation measures that are essential to minimise the impact of the proposed washery shall be listed if washery could not be located outside forest land.
 - iv. Movement of elephant has been reported in northern and southern part of lease area. It is also reported that the proposed Similipal-Satkosia Tiger Corridor is about 8.12 Km on the north side of the proposed project. Mining in the area is likely to cause Human-animal conflict in the area. Comments in this regard shall be sought from NTCA and Project Elephant Division of MoEF&CC with regard to wild life management plan with appropriate mitigation measures for the entire area.
 - v. From the perusal of land use it is learnt that 98.057 ha forest land has been earmarked for structures including drainage, roads, transmission lines, etc. This need detailed elaboration and justification.
 - vi. Safety zone shall be clearly earmarked in the proposal.
 - vii. There is discrepancy in the number of trees enumerated to be felled. As per DFO report, it is 1,06,536, whereas RCCF reported 1,06,209, and the SIR of Regional office reported 1,05,092 trees. The exact figure may be submitted.

4. Ministry vide its letter dated 14.10.2020 requested to the State Government to provide information as per observation made by FAC. In addition, NTCA and Project Elephant Divisions of this Ministry was also requested to furnish their comments on the observation of FAC vide Ministry's letter dated 14.10.2020 via post and through *email* .
5. Now, State Government vide their letter no. FE-DIV-0026-2021-3133/F&E dated 11.02.2021 has submitted their reply in response to Ministry's letter dated 14.10.2020. Details are as under:

S. N	Observations made by MoEF&CC	Reply from the State Government
i.	<p>The State Government has recommended the CA over degraded forest land equivalent to double the area proposed for diversion. The CA is proposed in Reserved Forests. At present this dispensation is available for proposals of Government of India and Central PSUs user agencies only Ministry vide para 2.4 (i) of Comprehensive guideline dtd.28.03.2019 has allowed CA over forest land not under management and/or administrative control of the State/ UT Forest Department and on which the provisions of FC Act, 1980 are applicable. State Government of Odisha shall explore option of finding degraded forest area outside the notified forests, in the category of area mentioned in Para 2.4 (i) of comprehensive guidelines.</p>	<p>In this regard, the State Government informed that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The RCCF, Angul has reported that the Government of India, MoEF&CC has accorded CPSU status to SCCL for the purpose of CA in 2013 .The SCCL has requested to Government of India, MoEF&CC to continue the CPSU status for SCCL. The Government of India, Ministry of Coal has also recommended to MoEF&CC for retaining the CPSU status for SCCL. b. Further, the User Agency has reported that the ongoing mines of SCCL will start getting closed from the year 2023 and the non-forest land after rehabilitation can be handed over to the Forest Department in the phased manner as furnished in the table below over and about. CPSU plantation in degraded forests. This will compensate the loss of forest areas. c. The user agency has also requested the Chief Secretary to Government of Odisha for issuing, orders for identified and allotment of 1600 Ha of degraded forest area outside the notified forest and not wider control of the Forest Department This process of identification of such land may take considerable time.
ii.	<p>A coal washery has been proposed over the forest area portion in the project area. State Government shall explore the possibility of establishing the coal washery, which is a non -site specific use, on non-forest area. The alternatives explored may be submitted.</p>	<p>In this regard, the State Government furnished the justification for locating the coal washery in the forest area as below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The entire non-forest/private land surrounding Naini Coal Blocks within 13 Kms is coal bearing area are earmarked as different coal blocks by the MoC for allocation. b. The entire Non-forest, Private land & forest land except 40.893 ha in the South-West

corner of the block (which traversed by 310 m fault) is the mineable area.

Considering the above facts following three alternative for the location of washery and its feasibility have been examined;

Alternative-I: (within forest land as proposed)

1. The South-Western corner of coal block which is a forest land is traversed by a 310 mtrs down throw fault (Plan enclosed as **Annexure-II**).

2. Due to this fault, coal seams have gone to a deeper horizon in this area and it is not viable for coal exploration by open cast (OC) method as the maximum depth of the OC is planned up to 210 m only.

Alternative-II: (In private land within coal block)

1. In case washery is planned in the private land within coal block, about 16 Million tones of -coal will be blocked which, will in addition to coal blocked under 98.057 ha of land required for various essential purposes. Further, coal under 40.060 ha land in the fault area is also not extractable.

Alternative-III: (Outside coal block)

1. Naini coal mine is located almost in the middle of the entire coal bearing area in Chhendipada region and is surrounded by number of coal blocks. Hence, non-coal bearing area/private land is not available within 13 kms from Naini mine for establishing washery. Coal block plan is enclosed as **Annexure- III**.
2. Further, in case if the washery is established at distant place, away from the coal block, transport of coal up to washery by road may create huge pollution load and of environmental issues

Hence, **Alternative-I** is the most feasible location to establish the washery, CHP, service buildings etc as the area is not viable for extraction of coal. After completion of the mining operation, plantation will be done in this area before returning back the area to the Forest

		<p>Deptt. This arrangement is as per the Mining Plan approved by the MoC, Govt. of India.</p>
<p>iii.</p>	<p>It was noted that as per land use plan, 40.060 ha forest land is proposed to be used for establishment of washery and service building. It is to be recalled that a coal washery's requirement of water is quite substantial. In addition, there is substantial outflow of wastewater from the washery. State Government should examine on the impact of large withdrawal from forest' area for the proposed washery, as well as the waste water and dust from the washery, on the flora and fauna of the locality. Establishing such unit requires adoption of precautionary principle. All mitigation measures that are essential to minimize the impact of the proposed washery shall be listed if washery could not be located outside forest land.</p>	<p>In this regard, the State Government informed that the user agency has furnished the information regarding water requirement and waste water management of coal washery as detailed below;</p> <p>Water requirement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. To meet the coal washing requirement, about 2000 m³/ day of water will be required. Besides coal washing, around 2000 m³/ day is required for various purposes of the mine requirements like dust suppression, washing of HE MM domestic requirement, plantation etc. b. Hence, the cumulative water requirement for mine including coal washing would be around 4000 m³/ day. c. The inflow of ground water in the mine would be around 20,000 m³/ day excluding rain water accumulation. d. Hence, the water requirement for the above Project activities including coal washing be met from water pumped out of the opencast mine itself. e. SCCL has submitted the application for permission from CGWA for drawl of ground water. The proposal has been processed at State level and forwarded to CGWA, New Delhi for issue of NOC. This NoC is expected shortly. f. After meeting the mine requirements, the excess water will be let out into nearby nallah after necessary treatment and sedimentation of solids and waste. <p>Waste Water Management</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The process of the washery is based on the closed water circuit system. All the water fed into the system will be collected after use and re-circulated after treatment in various units and no effluent will be allowed to escape into the natural drainage system. b. Thus, the operation of the washery will not cause any pollution to the local source of water. Garland drains will be provided along the washery boundary for drainage

		<p>of surface run-off within the washery, which will collect and carry the run off to settling pond.</p> <p>c. The rejects from washery will be sold to the customers if available as envisaged in Clause No. 8.2.2 of Coal Block Allotment Agreement and the unsalable rejects will be dumped in the OR dumps.</p> <p>d. Further, SCCL will implement all mitigation measures as per the conditions stipulated in the EC that are essential to minimize the environmental impact of the proposed washery.</p>
iv.	<p>Movement of elephant has been reported in northern and southern part of lease area It is also reported that the proposed Similipal-Satkosia Tiger Corridor is about 8.12 Km on the north side of the proposed project. Mining in the area is likely to cause Human-animal conflict in the area. Comments in this regard shall be sought from NTCA and project Elephant division of MoEF&CC with regard to wild life management plan with appropriate mitigation measures for the entire area.</p>	<p>In this regard, the State Government informed that the user agency has furnished an undertaking that Movement of elephant has been reported in northern and southern part of lease area. it is also reported that the proposed Similipal-Satkosia Tiger Corridor is about 8.12 Km on the north side of the proposed project. Mining in the area is likely to cause Human-animal conflict in the area. Comments in this regard shall be sought from NTCA and project Elephant division of MoEF&CC with regard to wild life management plan with appropriate mitigation measures for the entire area .</p>
v.	<p>From the perusal of land use it is learnt that 98.057 ha forest land has been earmarked for structures including drainage, roads, transmission lines, etc. this need detailed elaboration and justification</p>	<p>In this regard, the State Government furnished the detailed justification as below:</p> <p>a. About 29.194 ha of land has been earmarked for diversion of nallah (14.489 ha), garland drains (1.765 ha) and embankments & berms (12.94 ha).</p> <p>b. About 55.343 ha of land has been earmarked as Safe Barrier (7.5 m all along the boundary of the mine has been earmarked as Safe Barrier).</p> <p>c. About 13.520 ha of land has been earmarked as Toe wall (1.659 ha) and Haul road, inspection road etc (11.861 ha).</p> <p>d. As Naini Coal Block is surrounded by coal blocks on all the four sides, all the required Infrastructures like roads, garland drains, berms and other infrastructures needs to be established within the block only.</p> <p>e. The proposal for diversion of existing nallas, construction of bunds against</p>

		nalla etc has been processed and forwarded to higher authorities for approval and issue of NoC, which is expected shortly. f. All these are essentially required as per the statute and to carry out the Mining operations safely. The plan showing the details is enclosed under Annexure-V .
vi.	Safely zone shall be clearly earmarked in tire proposal.	In this regard, the State Government submitted the plan showing the safety zone all along the mine boundary at Annexure-VI .
vii.	There is discrepancy in the number of trees enumerated to be felled. As per DFO report, it is 10,06336, whereas RCCF reported 1,06,209, and the SIR of regional office reported 1,05,092 trees. The exact figure may be submitted.	In this regard, the State Government informed that the RCCF, Angul Circle has reported that the total no of trees enumerated is 1 06,536 which is indicated in the Part II report of the Divisional Forest Officer, Angul.

6. AIG, NTCA vide their Office Memorandum no. 7-17/2013-NTCA dated 04.11.2020 submitted their reply in response to this Division's letter dated 14.10.2020 conveying no objection of NTCA for the said project. **However, NTCA has not furnished specific comments on the observation of FAC.**

7. From the above:

- i. This office vide letter of even number dated 14.10.2020 requested the Project Elephant Division to submit their comments on the proposal.
- ii. Pending receipt of comments from Project Elephant Division, this office vide its letter dated 01.03.2021 again requested the Project Elephant Division to furnish their comments in the matter. Matter was also taken up telephonically with Scientist D, Project Elephant Division to expedite submission of comments.
- iii. It may be mentioned have that reply from the State Government and NTCA, as per the observations of FAC has been received. Comments from PE division are still awaited.
