

**(PARIVESH 1.0)**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC) meeting held on**  
**25.08.2025**

**Agenda No. 4**

**Proposal No. FP/HP/Others/11318/2015**

**Sub: Proposal for seeking prior approval of the Central Government under section 2 (1) (ii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 in favour of Municipal Corporation, Theog for non-forestry use of 0.096 ha. of Protected forest land for construction of Municipal Solid Waste Management Plant, Theog at Village- Bralti, within Theog Forest Division District- Shimla in the State of Himachal Pradesh (FP/HP/Others/11318/2015)- regarding.**

1. The agenda item was considered by the AC in its meeting held on 25.08.2025. The corresponding agenda note may be seen at [www.parivesh.nic.in](http://www.parivesh.nic.in).
2. During the meeting, all the facts and background of the proposal, along with examination of the proposal in the DSS were presented and explained by the Member Secretary before the AC for their examination and analysis. Committee was also apprised of the relevant provisions under other Acts, Rules and Guidelines relevant to the proposal and their significance.
3. The DDGF (Central), Regional Office, Chandigarh attended the meeting. The Advisory Committee (AC) after thorough deliberation and discussion observed the following:
  - i. The proposal is for diversion of 0.096 ha. of Protected forest land for construction of Municipal Solid Waste Management Plant, Theog at Village- Bralti, within Theog Forest Division District- Shimla in the State of Himachal.
  - ii. Component wise details submitted by Regional Office in their inspection report are as under:

<b>Component wise breakup</b>			
<b>S.no</b>	<b>Component</b>	<b>Forest Land (ha.)</b>	<b>Non-Forest Land (ha.)</b>
1.	Compost Processing area	0.04	0
2.	Compost Plant	0.005	0
3.	Reception	0.004	0
4.	Area for the other purpose like storing, loading	0.0186	0
5.	Pre-Segregation area	0.0064	0
6.	Collection area	0.008	0
7.	Waste management	0.009	0
8.	Hazard waste	0.0025	0
9.	Store room/ Staff sitting capacity	0.0025	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>0.096</b>	<b>0</b>

- iii. Canopy density in the proposed area is reported to be 0 of Eco class VI with no tree felling during implementation of the project.

- iv. Proposal does not fall within 10 km radius of the boundary of any PAs. No endangered, Schedule-I species, etc. have been reported in the area proposed for diversion. No protected archaeological / heritage site / defence establishment or any other important monuments is located in the area has been reported. Certificates to this effect have been submitted by DFO concerned.
- v. As per decision Rule- 1 and 2, the area does not fall into in High Conservation value Zone. Solid structure and boundary wall is visible in the proposed area for diversion. Further, the proposed area is devoid of vegetation cover.
- vi. Compensatory Afforestation has been proposed over 0.3 ha. degraded forest land in Survey No. 53E/8NE, U-86 Sholvi, Chadara Beat, Matiana Block, Theog Forest Range, Theog Forest Division, District-Shimla. CA scheme with 10 years of maintenance is provided. Site suitability certificate has been furnished by the concerned DFO.
- vii. The proposal involves violation as mentioned in Part-II. DFO, Theog has mentioned that as per record the proposal was first received for diversion of the proposed land in 2015 but the user agency had dumped the biodegradable waste on the site prior to the approval of Gol, and violated the provision of FCA, 1980. For this unlawful act the use agency was penalized by the forest department as well as by the National Green Tribunal during 2017-18. After that the proposal prepared for diversion of that land could not processed for approval due to some reasons. But now, in pursuant to the orders of National Green Tribunal the user agency has applied for the diversion of said land again and the joint inspection of the site at D-52 Rohru was conducted again on dated 26.07.2022. At present no garbage dumping has been noticed on the proposed site, but a shed is found constructed on the spot, hence user agency has violated provision of FCA, 1980.
- viii. The Committee was also appraised regarding NGT order in original Application No.189/2017 dt. 27.08.2018 are as under:

*Accordingly, we restrain Municipal Council from dumping garbage at the site and direct it to shift it to any other appropriate site as per Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016. We also note that under Section 2(ii) of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 provides that no forest land can be used for non-forest purpose except with the prior approval of the Central Government. Admittedly, no such prior approval of the Central Government has been taken for converting the forest land into the garbage dumping site.*

*In view of the clear violation of mandate of law as well as orders of this Tribunal, we direct Municipal Corporation to pay compensation of Rs. 5 Lakhs. The applicant will be entitled to a sum of ₹25,000/- towards cost out of the remaining, 75 % of the amount be deposited with State Pollution Control Board and 25% with the CPCB. It is made clear that Secretary of Urban Development, State of Himachal Pradesh will be responsible for enforcement of this order.*

*Learned counsel for the State of Himachal Pradesh states that the order being passed today will be strictly enforced. The site may be shifted within one month from today. If it is not done, it will be open for the Applicant to move this Tribunal and the Tribunal may consider stopping of the salary of the Secretary of Urban Development for non-compliance of the orders of this Tribunal.*

*Accordingly the application stand disposed of.*

- ix. The Ministry, after preliminary examination of the proposal, observed shortcomings viz. detailed violation report, clearly mentioning the nature, extent, date and details of the persons responsible for violation and action taken against user agency and action taken, if any, against forest officials, action taken by the State Government to evacuate construction, Detailed report on the case pertaining to the proposed area in the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal, component wise KML file and comments from State Government regarding solid structure and boundary wall visible in proposed area etc. Additional information was requested from the State on 28.01.2025. The Regional Office was also requested to submit an inspection report.
- x. The State Government submitted its reply online on 30.06.2025 and informed following:
  - a) The violation was made by the user agency by constructing a shed for disposal of biodegradable waste and dumping of waste at the proposed site. The violation was checked by the officials of Pollution Control Board and the official of Forest Department. The damage charges calculated by the pollution control board and also justified by the NGT were realized from the user agency. However, the shed was demolished 6 month back and now currently there is no structure at the proposed site.
  - b) The shed has now been demolished and at present there is no structure present on spot. The penalty for dumping of garbage and C/o shed was already realized by the Pollution Control Board. The visibility of shed in KML file is due to the old image.
  - c) The case/original Application No.189/2017 was disposed.
  - d) Revised KML file of proposed site showing component wise break-up has been submitted.
  - e) Solid structure showing in the DSS analysis must be due to the old satellite image. However, the boundary wall is under the possession of forest department and that is not removed to protect the area against illegal dumping.
- xi. Further, the Committee was also informed that the site inspection of the instant proposal was conducted by Regional Office, Chandigarh on 10.12.2024. The SIR has also been recommended by DDGF (C) of RO, Chandigarh. Summary of the same are as under:

**I. Legal status of the forest land proposed for diversion: Protected Forest.**

**II. Item-wise break-up details of the forest land proposed for diversion: Item-wise break-up:**

<b>Component wise breakup</b>			
<b>S.no</b>	<b>Component</b>	<b>Forest Land (ha.)</b>	<b>Non-Forest Land (ha.)</b>
1.	Compost Processing area	0.04	0
2.	Compost Plant	0.005	0
3.	Reception	0.004	0
4.	Area for the other purpose like storing, loading	0.0186	0
5.	Pre-Segregation area	0.0064	0
6.	Collection area	0.008	0
7.	Waste management	0.009	0
8.	Hazard waste	0.0025	0
9.	Store room/ Staff sitting capacity	0.0025	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>0.096</b>	<b>0</b>

**III. Wildlife:**

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

As per the details filled at para 8 in part II, the proposed area is not important from wildlife point of view.

**IV. Vegetation:**

**i. Total number of trees to be felled:** Nil.

**V. Background of the proposal:**

The Government of Himachal Pradesh vide dated 25.08.2024 submitted the fresh proposal to obtain approval of the Central Government under section 2 (1) (ii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 for diversion of 0.096 ha. of forest land in favour of Municipal Corporation Theog for the construction of Municipal Solid Waste Management Plant within the jurisdiction of Theog Forest Division, District Shimla Himachal Pradesh (Online Proposal No. FP/HP/Others/11318/2015).

The proposal involves violation and as per the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980, and the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Rules, 2023, issued on 29.12.2023, under Rule, 10 (2) (V), this proposal shall be examined and disposed by the Central Govt. Also, as per the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980, and the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Rules, 2023 under Rule 10 (4), "Site inspection report shall be prepared for proposals specified in sub-rule (2) by the Regional Office and the same shall be submitted to the Central Government for consideration by the Advisory Committee".

**VI. Whether proposal involves violation of Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam 1980 or not. If yes, a detailed report on violation including action taken against the concerned officials.**

The proposal involves violation as reported by DFO in para 11 of Part II. Further, a copy of the NGT order dated 27.08.2018 is also enclosed at Annexure 1 regarding this proposal wherein Hon'ble NGT restrained Municipal Corporation from dumping garbage at the site and directed to shift it to any other appropriate site. During site inspection no garbage noticed in the area. Officials of MC informed that after the order of Hon'ble NGT they are not dumping any garbage on this site after 2018. Further, Hon'ble NGT imposed a fine of ₹5,00,000/- on Municipal Corporation (Annexure II).

**VII. Whether proposal involves rehabilitation of displaced persons. If yes, whether rehabilitation plan has been prepared by the State Government or not. Details be furnished specifically if rehabilitation plan would affect any other forest area by translocating oustees in and around the said forest:**

As per record, no displacement of any person/Household was found.

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

As per record, the land being diverted has no socio- cultural / religious value.

**IX. Situation w.r.t. any Protected Area:**

As per record, the instant proposal is not falling in or around any protected area.

**X. Field observations/Actionable Points/recommendations:-**

- The user agency had earlier dumped the waste on the proposed site prior to the FCA approval and violates the provision of Van (Sanrakshan evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam 1980.
- Hon'ble NGT vide order dated 27.08.2018 restrain Municipal Corporation from dumping garbage at the site and directed to shift it to any other appropriate site. Further, Hon'ble NGT imposed a fine of ₹5,00,000/- on Municipal Corporation.
- During site inspection, no garbage noticed in the area.
- The proposal involves 0.096 ha forest land.
- It is recommended to impose penal NPV on the violation area i.e. 0.096 ha.

**XI. Recommendations of the DDGF (C) of Regional Office, MoEF&CC, Chandigarh:**

The proposal is for public utility and has been recommended by the State Government, accordingly same is recommended for consideration in the Advisory Committee as per the extant Rules and

Guidelines issued under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980.

4. **Decision of the Advisory Committee:** The Committee after detailed discussion and deliberation with the DDGF (Central), Regional Office, Chandigarh, recommended the proposal for grant of '*in-principle*' approval for diversion of 0.096 ha. of Protected forest land for construction of Municipal Solid Waste Management Plant, Theog at Village- Bralti, within Theog Forest Division District- Shimla in the State of Himachal subject to the general, standard and following specific conditions:
  - i. The User Agency shall pay the five (5) times penal NPV for the extent of violation done plus 12 percent simple interest from the date of raising of such demand till the deposit is made by the User Agency.
  - ii. Action under section 3A/3B of Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 be initiated by Regional Office, Chandigarh, as applicable.

### Agenda No. 5

File No. 4-KRB095/2005-BAN

**Sub: Proposal for seeking ex-post facto approval of the Central Government under section 2 (1) (ii) of Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 for diversion of 0.86 ha of forest land for construction of building for fire station in Sy. No. 61 of Bilakhand Village, Bhatkal Taluk -reg (Online Proposal No. FP/KA/OTHERS/1638/2005)**

1. The above stated agenda was considered by Advisory Committee (AC) in its meeting on 25.08.2025. The corresponding details of the agenda may be seen at [www.parivesh.nic.in](http://www.parivesh.nic.in).
2. During the meeting, all the facts and background of the proposal, along with the examination of the proposal in the DSS were presented and explained by Member Secretary before the Advisory Committee (AC). Committee was also apprised of the relevant provisions under Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 Rules and Guidelines. The DDGF (Central) Regional Office Bengaluru and the Nodal Officer Government of Karnataka was present in the meeting.
3. The Advisory Committee (AC) after thorough deliberation and discussion observed the following:
  - i. The Government of Karnataka vide its letter dated 25/05/2005 had earlier submitted the subject proposal to the RO Bengaluru.
  - ii. During the scrutiny of the proposal in the Regional Office, it was observed that during the year 1996, the then incumbent DCF has collected an amount of ₹60,000/- towards compensatory afforestation from the user agency and subsequent incumbents have allowed the user agency for construction activities in forest area. While submitting the proposal three names of the officials who are responsible for violation was also mentioned. Therefore, RO vide letter dated 11.07.2005 requested the State Government to initiate action against the officials responsible for violation.

- iii. State Government vide letter dated 15.12.2007 had forwarded a report of PCCF, which mention that the area proposed for construction of fire station is lateritic and rocky and devoid of tree growth and hence it has not come to the notice of protection staff immediately and as soon as the matter came to their notice, the works have been stopped and booked the FIR as per the provisions of Karnataka Forest Act, 1963. Therefore, it was opined that initiating action against the concerned staff is not appropriate.
- iv. RO vide letter dated 13.02.2008 informed the State Government that, on perusal of the report of the State Government, it is observed that the State Forest officials had allowed the use of forest land for non-forestry purpose in violation of the provisions of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 in this project. It is therefore, requested that responsibility for violation of the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 has to be fixed on the concerned officials of the State Government and a detailed report as stipulated vide para 1.9 of the guidelines issued under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 be furnished to this office at the earliest for further consideration of the proposal. The State Government's reply was not received despite reminders dated 04.08.2014, 08.09.2017 and 20.09.2018.
- v. Meanwhile a D.O. letter dated 06.07.2020 was received from Principal Secretary (Forest), in the said D.O. letter it was stated that earlier the proposal was submitted to Government of India vide letter dated 09.12.1998 which was closed by the Government of India due to non submission additional information on time, and meanwhile user agency has taken up the construction of fire station for which FIR No.11/2003-04 dated 24.12.2003 was booked. In this regard, the Principal Secretary had requested not to insist on taking action against the officials in the matter as this was old case and action has been taken by the forest department as has been practically feasible. Thus the Principal Secretary (Forest) had requested for grant of Stage-I approval.
- vi. In response to the D.O letter of Principal Secretary, R.O vide its letter dated 14th August, 2020 requested the State Government to provide the details of the building constructed in the forest land. The State Government vide its letter dated 04/05/2022 had informed that one building is constructed and one bore well is dug.
- vii. The Matter was examined in the Regional Office in the light of Ministry guideline dated 22nd March, 2022 and requested the State Government to furnish the action taken against the user agency as per para 1.21 (i) (a) of comprehensive guideline issued by the Ministry vide its letter date 28.03.2019 to process the proposal as per Ministry guideline dated 28.03.2022.
- viii. In response to the Ministry's letter dated 28th March, 2022 and reminder dated 31.05.2022, the State Government vide its letter dated 15.04.2024 has again requested for approval of the said proposal and also furnished only two names of the officials of user agency (instead of three mentioned earlier) who are responsible for violation. However, the action taken on the violators and status of FIR filed during the year 2003 etc. has not been furnished by the State Government. Further, name of the forest Department officials who are responsible for violation is also not mentioned by the State Government.
- ix. The instant proposal is a violation case. Therefore, as per Rule 10 of sub rule 9 (2) VSES Rules 2023, the proposal related to *ex-post facto* approval involving violation of Adhiniyam has to be dealt by MoEF&CC, New Delhi

and site inspection has to be conducted by the Regional Office for such cases. Thus the instant proposal has been forwarded by the RO to the Ministry as per above Rule.

- x. The site inspection of the area proposed for diversion has been carried out by Smt. Praneetha Paul, DIGF, Regional Office, Bengaluru on 29.05.2024. The detailed site inspection report are as below:
  - a.
  - b. As the case is involved violation the RO vide letter No. F(C)A/11.2/142/Kar/Misc/1996 dated 01.07.1997 requested the State to furnish a few clarification, before it could be further processed.
  - c. The clarifications sought by the Regional Office was not furnished by the State Government even after a lapse of one year, the proposal was treated as closed vide letter No. F(C) A/11.2/142/Kar/Misc/ dated 12.10.1998.
  - d. The PCCF, Karnataka vide Letter No. A5 (2) GFL.CR.27/04-05 dated 21.03.2005 recommended and resubmitted the proposal to Karnataka State Government, and further to the Regional office, stating that the diversion of 0.86 ha.(increased from 0.80 to 0.86 ha) of forest land is unavoidable as the applicant had already constructed the building in violation of the F(C) Act, 1980 and the RFO, Bhatkal had booked an offence case (F.I.R. No -11/03-04 dated 24.12.2003) against three officers namely:
    - a. Sri. K. Shekar Kothari, Station Master, Karnataka State Fire and Emergency Service, Fire Station, Bhatkal.
    - b. Sri. S. N. Karehanumegowda, Deputy Director, Karnataka Land Army Corporation, Karwar.
    - c. Sri. U. Ramesh, Regional Officer, Fire Station, Shimoga.
  - e. The Regional Office, Bengaluru in its reply to the State Government vide letter No.4-KRB095/2005-Ban/679 dated 11.07.2005 stated that, as the incumbent DCF in 1996 collected the CA levy from the User Agency and subsequent incumbents allowed the construction activities, the names of the incumbent DCF's responsible may also be provided.
  - f. However, the PCCF, Karnataka in his reply vide No. AS (2) GFL.CR.27/04-05 dated 23.11.2007, to the Regional Office Bengaluru opined that the staff of forest department, on obtaining information about the violation had immediately taken action to stop the work and booked FIR as per KFA, 1963. It was further requested to consider it as a Bonafide lapse.
  - g. The Karnataka State Government vide letter no. KFD/HOFF/A52K (GFL)/20/2018-FC dated 12.04.22 to the Regional Office, Bengaluru has stated that the User Agency has already constructed one building and dug a bore well and has further requested for the construction of additional 3 fire stations and 27 quarters in 0.86 ha of forest land in F. Sy.no.61, Bilalkhand taluk, Honnavara Division.
  - h. The Regional office in reply vide F.No.4-KRB 095/2005-BAN/390 dated 30.05.2023 asked for the action taken report with reference to the violation of F(C) Act, 1980.
  - i. The Karnataka State Government in its reply letter no. FEE 13 FLL. 2019 (e) dated 15.04.2024 has stated that the officers against whom

the offence case has been booked, have either retired from service or passed away and hence requested to regularize the violation.

- j. Against this backdrop, the site inspection was carried out on 29.05.2024. The forest area under consideration (F.Sy.No.61, Bilalkhand village, Bhatkal Taluk, Honnavara Division) is very close to the Bhatkal town and situated next to the Bhatkal-Sagar State Highway. One fully functional fire station that houses a fire engine and an office was found in the premises, in addition to a borewell, a small shed and a playground. A small stretch of land behind the fire station has been clear felled. The vegetation surrounding the area mostly comprises of *Acacia auricularis*.
- k. **Conclusion:** From the site inspection and scrutiny of documents made available, it can be concluded that the User Agency had constructed a fire station (that houses a fire engine and an office), a borewell, a small shed and a playground without following the due procedure laid down in the F(C) Act, 1980. As per the Karnataka, State Government, the officers against whom the offence case has been booked, have either retired from service, or have passed away and hence requested to regularize the violation. The Karnataka State Government has further requested for the construction of additional 3 fire stations and 27 quarters in the same forest land (0.86 ha Forest Survey No. 61, Bilalkhand Taluk, Honnavara Division)
- l. After the examination of the above facts, the Ministry vide note dated 11.07.2024 has requested the RO to provide the following information:
  - a. KML files of the proposed area for diversion may be submitted by RO.
  - b. Recommendation on penalty to be imposed for the reported violation may be submitted by the RO.
  - c. Reasons for extraordinary delay for submission of the information by the State Government.
  - d. The clear recommendation of the DDGF (C) may also be provided in respect of the additional requirement of construction 3 fire stations and 27 quarters in the same forest land as these activities are non-site specific.
- m. The State Govt. has submitted the above information to the Regional office Bengaluru and it has been noted that the justification of additional construction of 3 fire stations and 27 quarters, the user agency has clarified that the proposed 2 acres of land i.e. 0.86 ha land at F. Sy. No.61 is only for well equipped fire station building, quarters for officers and staff, parade ground for conducting regular drills and weekly parade to maintain the physical fitness of the staff and to construct the large water tank for fire fighting and other facilities of fire station. No additional land is requested except 2 acre land required in F.Sy. No.61. It is mentioned in letter dated 24.07.2024, 13.08.2024, it is wrongly mentioned as 3 fire station, instead 3 bay fire station. The State Government has forwarded the KML file of the area proposed for diversion. The DSS report/google imagery of the said land is enclosed.

- n. After that the DDGF (RO) Bengaluru dated 01.08.2025 has forwarded the response of the State Govt. on the information asked by the Ministry and with regard the recommendation on the penalty to be imposed for the reported violation, it has been recommended that, since the user agency has constructed a fire station to accommodate two fire engines, installed a borewell, erected a small temporary shed, and cleared a limited area of land for conducting drills, a penal Net Present Value (NPV) at twice the applicable rate may be imposed.
- o. As per the SIR of RO, a fully functional fire station, office, borewell and a small shed has already been constructed. Furthermore, it is stated that 3 fire stations shall be constructed in the same 0.86 Ha. However, as per last submission of the State Government dated 23.01.2025, no additional land is requested except 2 acre (0.86Ha) land. Following components are proposed:-
  - a. 3-bay fire station,
  - b. Quarters for officers and staff,
  - c. Parade ground for conducting drills and
  - d. Large storage tank.
- p. Regarding action taken against the officers responsible for violation the State has informed that the proposal for diversion of 0.86 ha. (increased from 0.80 to 0.86 ha) of forest land is unavoidable as the applicant had already constructed the building in violation of the F(C) Act, 1980 and the RFO, Bhatkal had booked an offence case (F.I.R. No -11/03-04 dated 24.12.2003) against three officers namely:
  - a. Sri. K. Shekar Kothari, Station Master, Karnataka State Fire and Emergency Service, Fire Station, Bhatkal.
  - b. Sri. S. N. Karehanumegowda, Deputy Director, Karnataka Land Army Corporation, Karwar.
  - c. Sri. U. Ramesh, Regional Officer, Fire Station, Shimoga.
- q. However, the PCCF, Karataka in his reply vide No. AS (2) GFL.CR.27/04-05 dated 23.11.2007, to the Regional office Bengaluru opined that the staff of forest department, on obtaining information about the violation had immediately taken action to stop the work and booked FIR as per KFA, 1963. It was further requested to consider it as a bonafide lapse.
- r. As per the detailed given in SIR of RO, the official responsible for violation and against whom the offence case has been booked, have either retired from service, or have passed away.
- s. Reasons for extraordinary delay for submission of the information by the State Government has been provided.
- xi. The committee noted that locating a fire station on the forest land is a non site-specific activity. The State Govt. shall explore the suitable non-forest land for the said activity.
4. **Decision of the Advisory Committee:** After thorough deliberation and discussion with Nodal Officer (FCA), Government of Karnataka and DDGF (Central), RO Bengaluru considering the fact that the proposed activity is non site-specific in nature and that Non-forest land can be explored for the said activity, the Advisory Committee recommended to reject the proposal.

## Agenda No. 9

**Proposal No.: FP/MH/TRANS/37560/2018**

**Subject: Proposal seeking *ex-post facto* approval under Section 2 (1) (ii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 for diversion of 0.45 ha forest land in favour of EHV Project Division M.S.E.T.C.L. Amravati for construction of LILO on 132 KV Yavatmal - Yavatmal MIDC line for 132 KV Darwha Sub-Station Transmission Line in Yavatmal District in the State of Maharashtra (Online No. FP/MH/TRANS/37560/2018) - regarding**

1. The above stated agenda item was considered by the Advisory Committee (AC) in its meeting held on 25.08.2025. The corresponding agenda note may be seen at [www.parivesh.nic.in](http://www.parivesh.nic.in). The Dy. DGF (Central), RO, Nagpur and Nodal Officer, Government of Maharashtra attended the meeting.
2. During the meeting, all the facts and background of the proposal, along with examination of the proposal in the DSS were presented and explained by the Member Secretary before the AC for their examination and analysis. The committee was also apprised of the relevant provisions under other Acts, Rules and Guidelines relevant to the proposal and their significance.
3. The Advisory Committee (AC) after thorough deliberation and discussion observed the following:
  - i. The Government of Maharashtra vide letter no. FLD 3222/CR-213/F-10 dated 14.09.2022 submitted the above mentioned proposal seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Section 2 (1) (ii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 to the Regional Office, Nagpur.
  - ii. Legal Status of the forest land involved is Reserved Forest having density of vegetation as 0.5 and Eco Class-3 with 57 nos. of the project affected trees.
  - iii. An area of 1 ha double degraded forest land for C.A. in single patch with Comptt No 112 village Darwha (Kinhi Valgi) Range Darwha, Round Darwha, Beat South Darwha, District Yavatmal is proposed by the State Govt.
  - iv. As informed by the DFO in Part II of the application form, the proposed area does not form part of National Park, Wildlife Sanctuary, Biosphere Reserve, Tiger Reserve, Elephant Corridor etc.
  - v. There are no rare/ endangered/ unique species of flora and fauna found in the area proposed for diversion.
  - vi. There are no protected archaeological/ heritage site/ defence establishment or any other important monument located in the area proposed for diversion.
  - vii. State Govt. further informed that the requirement of forest land as proposed by the User Agency in col.2 of Part-I is unavoidable and bare minimum for the project.
  - viii. Examination of the instant proposal revealed certain shortcomings and the same was communicated to the State Government vide RO, Nagpur letter dated 24.11.2022. In this regard, the Government of Maharashtra vide their letter no. FLD- 3222/C.R.213/F-10 dated 16.05.2023 submitted a report on the queries sought vide RO, Nagpur.
  - ix. The Government of Maharashtra vide letter dated 16.05.2023 submitted the detailed violation report to the RO Nagpur.

- x. The proposal was discussed in the Regional Empowered Committee (REC) Meeting held on dated 14.07.2023. After detailed discussion and examination of the proposal, the Committee decided that proposal shall again be placed before the REC after receipt of following:
  - a) Detailed violation report including the nature and extent of the violation, action taken by the State Forest Department under IFA, 1927 and FCA, 1980 along with all relevant documents. The name of the officials responsible for the violation from the User Agency as well as the State Forest Department and action taken against them.
- xi. The decision of the REC was communicated to the State Government by the RO, Nagpur vide their letter dated 25.07.2023. In this regard, the PCCF (HoFF) vide letter no. Desk-17/Nodal/ Yavatmal/ID-37560/3178 dated 15.02.2024 submitted a report on the queries sought vide RO, Nagpur.
- xii. RO Nagpur requested the State Government to submit the proposal to the Ministry for further consideration. However, the State Government forwarded the proposal to the RO Nagpur through online; RO, Nagpur on 04.12.2024 forwarded the instant proposal through e-file to the Ministry, New Delhi.
- xiii. From the examination of the above said proposal, certain shortcomings were noticed and the same were communicated to the State Govt. vide letter dated 23.12.2024 and the Regional Office Nagpur was requested to conduct the Site Inspection for the proposal vide letter dated 23.12.2024.
- xiv. The site inspection of the instant proposal was conducted by the Technical Officer, Regional Office, Nagpur on 25.01.2025 along with the officials of the State Forest Department and representatives of User Agency. The major findings and recommendations is given as under:
  - a) Maximum area required for the project is a non-forest area i.e. 98.10 ha, however, the transmission conductor line in one patch falls in the Reserved Forest. Hence, the User Agency submitted the instant proposal seeking approval under VSSA, 1980. However, the User Agency has already carried out stringing of transmission lines without prior approval of the Central Government. Hence, justification for selection of the proposed site at this juncture may not be required. During the field inspection it was noticed that a narrow patch of RF area falls within the transmission line alignment which is unavoidable.
  - b) The forest area proposed for diversion does not form part of any PAs. It was also reported that no wildlife present in the area proposed for diversion. However, during the field visit leopard pug mark was noticed. Since the proposed non forestry activity is for transmission lines and as such no towers are laid in the forest area, impact on wild animals is negligible. However, the specific condition may be imposed that the User Agency shall provide bird deflector.
  - c) As reported, no protected archaeological/heritage site/defence establishment or any other important monument is located in the area.

- d) Requirement of forest land as proposed by the user agency is unavoidable and bare minimum for the project.
  - e) The State Government reported that the User Agency carried out work in violation of V(S&S) Adhiniyam, 1980 over an extent of 0.45 ha. As per the record furnished by the State Forest Department Officials during the inspection, the alleged work in violation of V(S&S) Adhiniyam, 1980 was carried out by the User agency over an area of 0.45 by stringing of transmission line. No breakup of the forest area was noticed, and transmission tower has not been constructed in the reserved forest.
  - f) Since the User Agency already executed the work and only bushes were present beneath the conductor, CA cost may be levied as per rule 13 (5) of the VSS rule 2023. Accordingly, cost towards raising and maintenance of appropriate numbers of trees may be realised from the UA as per the Ministry Guidelines.
  - g) DDGF (Central), Regional Office, Nagpur has recommended the proposal stating that based on the recommendation of the State Government, the proposal is recommended for consideration under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980, subject to the following conditions:
    - i. The CA cost may be levied as per rule 13 (5) of the VSS rule 2023.
    - ii. The User Agency shall provide bird deflectors at the project cost.
    - iii. The State Government may initiate legal action as per the provisions of the VSSA, 1980, and the rules/guidelines framed thereunder for any violation of the VSSA, 1980.
  - xv. The Government of Maharashtra vide letter No. FLD-3222/C.R.213/F-10 dated 30.07.2025 submitted reply to information sought by the Ministry vide letter dated 23.12.2024.
  - xvi. As per the KML file received from the State, the total area of the transmission line (TL) is found 95.218 ha., out of which forest area within the proposed Transmission Line route has been found as 1.21 ha based on the forest compartment boundary available on the DSS whereas the instant proposal is for diversion of 0.45 ha forest land.
4. **Decision of the Advisory Committee:** The Committee had detailed discussion and deliberation with the Dy. DGF (Central), RO, Nagpur and Nodal Officer, Government of Maharashtra. After going through the facts of the proposal and submissions made by the Nodal Officer, Government of Maharashtra, the Committee '**deferred**' the proposal and sought clarification/information on the following for further consideration in the matter:
- i. As per the DSS analysis based upon the KML file received from the State, the total area under the transmission line (TL) is found to be 95.218 ha., out of which forest area within the proposed Transmission Line has been found to be 1.21 ha, whereas the instant proposal is for diversion of 0.45 ha forest land only. The State Government shall ensure that the entire forest land involved in the transmission line is included in the forest land diversion proposal and revised proposal is

submitted accordingly along with relevant documents/certificates and KML files.

### Agenda No. 11

**File No.: FP/UP/Def/25872/20178B/UP/10/54/2022/FC**

**Subject: Proposal for seeking approval of the Central Government under Section 2 (1) (ii) of the Van (SanrakshanEvamSamvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 for diversion of 12.95 hectare Reserved Forest land for setting up 15 Border outposts by 59th Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) on Indo- Nepal Border of Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary in Bahraich District, Uttar Pradesh (Proposal No.FP/UP/Def/25872/2017)**

1. The agenda for above subject proposal was considered by the Advisory Committee (AC) in its meeting held on 25.08.2025. The corresponding agenda note may be seen at [www.parivesh.nic.in](http://www.parivesh.nic.in). The Nodal Officer, Govt. of Uttar Pradesh and DDGF (Central), Regional Office, MoEF&CC, Chandigarh in charge of Lucknow, Regional Office attended the meeting.
2. During the meeting, all the facts and background of the proposal, along with examination of the proposal in the DSS were presented and explained by the Member Secretary. The Committee was also apprised of the relevant provisions under other Acts, Rules and Guidelines relevant to the proposal and their significance.
3. The Advisory Committee after thorough deliberation and discussion observed that:
  - i. **The State Government of Uttar Pradesh vide letter No. 349/81-2-2022-800(288)/2021 dated 21st April, 2022 has submitted the proposal to Regional Office, Lucknow for seeking approval of the Central Government under Section 2 (1) (ii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 for diversion of 12.95 hectare Reserved Forest land for setting up 15 Border outposts by 59th Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) on Indo- Nepal Border of Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary in Bahraich District, Uttar Pradesh**
  - ii. The total forest area under the proposal is 12.95 ha of Reserved forest land which is located in the Bahraich District, Uttar Pradesh.
  - iii. The proposed forest area is Reserved forest with canopy density of 0.8 (Eco Class-1) and no tree have been proposed to be felled.
  - iv. As per guidelines issued by MoEF, GOI dated 02.08.2005, State Govt. permitted SSB to establish temporary Border Out Posts vide letter No. 3546/14-2-2008 dated 23.02.2008. It was mentioned in the letter that the land which will be given to SSB will remain as forest land. The permission of BOPs functioning was given for five years which ended in 2013. After that, since 23.08.2013 the U/A has is in occupation of the said land without any permission.
  - v. The proposal was examined in the Regional Office, Lucknow. After examination, the instant proposal was discussed in two REC meetings held on 10.08.2023 (Agenda item 8.6) and 15.02.2024 (Agenda item 3.4). As per decision held in the REC meeting dated 15.02.2024, Regional Office sought certain information from the State Government including suitability of CA land for plantation and comments of Chief

Wildlife Warden. The State Government vide letter dated 09.04.2025 informed that a certificate has been submitted by the Divisional Forest Officer, Katarniaghat that 25.90 hectares of forest land in Dwaba forest block of Kakraha Range is suitable for compensatory plantation. At present, bushes have grown at some places on the said forest land, which will be cleared at the time of plantation. The Divisional Forest Officer, Katarniaghat has informed that only the native species mentioned in the Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary Management Plan which will be suitable for the development of wildlife and their natural habitat in the sanctuary, will be planted in CA scheme.

- vi. The Regional Office, Lucknow forwarded the proposal to the Ministry for necessary action as the violation of VSESA, 1980 was reported in the part-II of the proposal. As per Rule 10 (2) (v) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Rules, 2023, ex-post facto approval involving violation of the provisions of the Adhiniyam, shall be examined and disposed of by the Central Government in the manner specified under these rules.
- vii. The State has informed that the Standing Committee, NBWL has approved the proposal in its 58th meeting held on 3.7.2020.
- viii. The committee observed that the matter is related to National security and already temporary BOP have been established in the designated places for which now approval for permanent structure and regularization beyond authorized period is sought. State government has certified that requirement of land is bare minimum.
- ix. As per DSS analysis, calculated area of Shape file/ KML file of Forest land proposed for diversion is 12.986 ha. (GIS software calculated). As per the DSS, the proposed forest diversion sites are located within the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve. The instant proposal falls under Inviolable or In high conservation zone (HCV) category as per the DSS Rule-1 because the proposed forest land is located within the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve (Katarniaghat WLS). The State Govt. has proposed Compensatory afforestation (CA) over forest land and the proposed CA site is located within the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve (Katarniaghat WLS), Bahraich District of Uttar Pradesh State.
- x. The Site Inspection of the proposed area was carried by Shri Raja Ram Singh, DIGF, RO, Chandigarh on 09.7.2025. The field observations in SIR are as under:-
  - a. Out of total 15 BOPs, the BoPS located at Nishangara, Salarpur, Dharmapur, Benawakuan, Murtiha and Katarniyaghat were visited for verification of the current land use and status of construction. Other BOPs could not be visited due to water logged roads/remoteness and paucity of time.
  - b. During field visit, it was observed that the proposed layout plan for BoPs for ex-post Facto approval, includes establishment of BSNL Mobile Tower also and changes from temporary structures to permanent constructions within the already occupied forest area. All structures within the periphery of the BOPs were of non-permanent (temporary) type.
  - c. The proposal may be considered for regularization of the non-forestry use of 12.95 ha of forest land as per layout proposed by

the SSB, except the BSNL Tower, as the user agency involved in the erection of BSNL tower is different. The BSNL may approach to the competent authority separately for re-diversion for establishment of BSNL Tower subsequent to the regularization of the instant proposal.

DDGF (Central), RO, Chandigarh in-charge of RO, Lucknow recommended the proposal for consideration in the Advisory Committee as per the extant Rules and Guidelines issued under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980.

- xi. The Wildlife such as Elephant, Tiger, Leopard, Deer are present around the Forest land proposed for diversion. As per the comments of DFO, this arrangement will create more secure environmental & natural habitat to wild life by keeping poachers & encroachers away from Indian territory as well as forest area.
  - xii. As per SIR, it has been observed that the proposed layout plan for BoPs for ex-post facto approval, include establishment of BSNL Mobile Tower and changes from temporary structures to permanent constructions within already occupied forest areas. In the SIR, DDGF (Central) recommended regularization of the non-forestry use of 12.95 ha of forest land as per layout proposed by the SSB, except the BSNL Tower, as the user agency involved in the erection of BSNL tower is different. The BSNL may approach to the competent authority separately for re-diversion for establishment of BSNL Tower subsequent to the regularization of the instant proposal.
4. **Decision of Advisory Committee:** The Committee after thorough deliberation and discussion with DDGF (Central), RO, Lucknow and Nodal Officer, Govt. of Uttar Pradesh and after going through the facts of the proposal, recommended the proposal for granting 'in-principle' approval under Section 2 (1) (ii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 for diversion of 12.95 ha of forest land in favour of Sashtia Seema Bal (SSB) for establishment of 15 Border Out Posts (BOPs) (namely Dharampur, Katarniaghat, Bharatapur/95, Korliaghat/98, Kawabari, Ramapurwa/76, Ramapurwa/79, Nishanghara, Gumnabaru, Mailanala, Taranagar, Murtiha, Benwakuwan, Ramapurwa/82 and Kothiyaghat) for security of Indian Border subject to the general, standard and following specific conditions:-
- i. The penalty for violation shall be equal to NPV of forest land per hectare for each year of violation from the date of actual diversion as reported by the inspecting officer with maximum up to five (5) times the NPV plus 12 percent simple interest from the date of raising of such demand till the deposit is made.
  - ii. As per para 3.4 of Chapter 3 of Consolidate Guidelines issued under Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 and Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Rules, 2023, the NPV shall be charged to the extent of ten times of the normal NPV payable in the case of National Parks and five times in case of Sanctuaries.
  - iii. The State Government shall inquire and initiate action under Section 3A & 3B for violation of the provisions of Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 as applicable,
  - iv. The matter regarding imposition of penal CA is under consideration for the formulation of a uniform policy guideline in the matter. Keeping this

in view, the imposition of penal CA (if any) shall be as per the said guideline, if issued.

- v. This in-principle approval is limited to establishment of Border Out posts and shall not be applicable for the establishment of the 4G mobile towers of BSNL or any other user agency. The State Government shall submit a separate proposal for establishment of mobile tower for approval as per the applicable rules.

### **Agenda No. 12**

#### **Proposal No. 9-PBB002-2024-CHA**

**Sub: Proposal for seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Section 2 (1) (ii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 in favour of Shri Jatin Sharma S/o Shri Raguber Chand Sharma District Pathankot for non-forestry use of 0.9606 ha. of forest land for construction of Hotel Badhani Country Side on Pathankot to Dalhousie road Km 20 left/side at Village- Bhamrota, Khasra No. 387,388,389 delisted area of section 4 of PLPA 1900 Tehsil - Dhar Kalan, Forest Division and District Pathankot in the State of Punjab (FP/PB/Others/36851/2018)- regarding.**

5. The agenda item was considered by the AC in its meeting held on 25.08.2025. The corresponding agenda note may be seen at [www.parivesh.nic.in](http://www.parivesh.nic.in).
6. During the meeting, all the facts and background of the proposal, along with examination of the proposal in the DSS were presented and explained by the Member Secretary before the AC for their examination and analysis. Committee was also apprised of the relevant provisions under other Acts, Rules and Guidelines relevant to the proposal and their significance.
7. The DDGF (Central), Regional Office, Chandigarh and Nodal Officer, Government of Punjab attended the meeting. The Advisory Committee (AC) after thorough deliberation and discussion observed the following:
  - xii. The proposal is for diversion of 0.9606 ha of Forest land for construction of Hotel Badhani Country Side on Pathankot to Dalhousie road Km 20 left/side at Village- Bhamrota, Khasra No. 387,388,389 delisted area of section 4 of PLPA 1900 Tehsil - Dhar Kalan, Forest Division and District Pathankot in the State of Punjab.
  - xiii. As per component wise details submitted by Regional Office in their inspection report that area is proposed for construction of the hotel including common hall, toilets and rooms.
  - xiv. Canopy density in the proposed area is reported to be 0 of Eco class 3 with no tree felling during implementation of the project.
  - xv. Proposal does not fall within 10 km radius of the boundary of any PAs. No endangered, Schedule-I species, etc. have been reported in the area proposed for diversion. No protected archaeological / heritage site / defence establishment or any other important monuments is located in the area has been reported. Certificates to this effect have been submitted by DFO concerned.

- xvi. As per decision Rule- 1 and 2, the area does not fall into in High Conservation value Zone. Observation based on Google Earth: solid structures are visible in the proposed area.
- xvii. Compensatory Afforestation has been proposed over 1.92 ha. degraded forest land in UP Narianpur Tehsil- Dhar Kalan District- Pathankot. CA scheme with 10 years of maintenance is provided. Site suitability certificate has been furnished by the concerned DFO.
- xviii. As per DSS, Observation based on Google Earth: cultivation land is visible in the proposed CA land. Further, it is located on the river side.
- xix. The proposal involves violation as mentioned in Part-II. DFO, Pathankot has mentioned in Part- II that there is violation. Violation over an area of 0.9606 ha has been done by Shri Jatin Sharma, DR. No. 904435 dated 25.05.2010 & DR. No. 904471 dated 22.04.2012 issued against user agency & Prosecution Case has been filed in the Hon'ble Court & fine of ₹500 imposed to the user agency by the Hon'ble Court. Further, DFO, Pathankot has mentioned in Part- II that no work is in progress. However, Regional Office in their Inspection report has mentioned that the User Agency is continuously using the entire forest land proposed for diversion and permanent structures has been constructed.
- xx. The Ministry, after preliminary examination of the proposal, requested State Government to submit detailed violation report including action taken against erring forest officials along with English/ Hindi translated copy on 13.06.2024 and 09.06.2025. Further, Regional Office, Chandigarh was also requested to carry out site inspection and submit report to the Ministry along with recommendation to the Ministry for further consideration vide Ministry letters dated 13.06.2025 and 08.06.2025.
- xxi. State Government vide letter dated 14.08.2025 has informed that above-mentioned diverted area has been de-listed under the PLPA, 1900, and is no longer under the jurisdiction of the Department of Forests and Wildlife Preservation. Therefore, no action is warranted against the concerned official for the inability to prevent the use of forest land for non-forestry purposes without the prior approval of the Government of India.
- xxii. Ministry vide letter dated 24.07.2009 delisted 55,339.95 ha cultivated and habitation area closed under Punjab Land Preservation Act, 1900 from the list of forest areas in Districts of Ropar, Nawanshar, Hoshiarpur and Gurdaspur subject to following conditions:
  - 1) The State Government shall ensure that no commercial activities are permitted on such de-listed land;
  - 2) The de-listed land shall only be used for bonafide use of agriculture and for sustaining the livelihood of the people/owner of the land;
  - 3) If inadvertently, any notified or otherwise forest areas are found to have been included in the present list of areas being considered for

de-listing, such areas shall not be deemed to have been de-listed from the list of forest areas of the State.

- xxiii. Further, the Committee was also informed that the site inspection of the instant proposal was conducted by Regional Office, Chandigarh on 03.04.2025. The SIR has also been recommended by DDGF (C) of RO, Chandigarh. Summary of the same are as under:

I. **Legal status of the forest land proposed for diversion:** Delisted area of section 4 of PLPA 1900.

II. **Item-wise break-up details of the forest land proposed for diversion:** Item-wise break-up

Exact area of project components has not been provided it has been submitted that the area is proposed for construction of the hotel including common hall, toilets and rooms.

III. **Whether proposal involves any construction of buildings (including residential) or not. If yes, details there of:** Yes.

IV. **Wildlife:**

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

As per the forest officials present during the inspection; the proposed area is not important from wildlife point of view.

V. **Vegetation:**

**Details of total number of trees to be felled:** No tree felling is proposed

VI. **Background on the proposal:**

The User Agency has proposed diversion of 0.9606 ha forest land proposed for construction of Hotel Badhani Country Side on Pathankot to Dalhousie Road KM 20 L/S at Village Bhamrota, Khasra No. 387, 388, 389 delisted area of section 4 of PLPA 1900, Tehsil Dhar Kalan, District and Forest Division Pathankot, Punjab.

VII. **Whether proposal involves violation of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 or not. If yes, a detailed report on violation including action taken against the concerned officials.**

It was noted during the site inspection that the User Agency has used forest area (Delisted area of section 4 of PLPA 1900) for construction of the hotel without prior approval of the Central Government under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980. It was observed during the inspection that the common hall and toilets has been constructed and the area behind the common hall is proposed for room's construction. The area proposed for room construction has also been worked and supporting wall has been constructed. The User Agency is continuously using the entire forest land proposed for diversion

and permanent structures has been constructed. As the structures have already been constructed and are operating; the case is for post-facto approval per prevailing provisions under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980, wherein, the forest land has been already used for non-forest purpose.

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

No.

- IX. **Reclamation Plan:** Not Applicable

1. Details and financial allocation: Not Applicable.

- X. **Details on catchment and command area under the project:** Not Applicable.

- XI. **Cost benefit ratio:** Not Applicable.

- XII. **Recommendations of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests/ State Government:** Submitted along with the proposal.

- XIII. **Whether land being diverted has any socio-cultural/religious value. Whether any sacred grove or very old grown trees/forests exists in areas proposed for diversion:** The officials of the State Forest Department informed that the land being diverted has no socio-cultural / religious value.

- XIV. **Situation w.r.t. any Protected Area:** There are No Protected Areas.

- XV. **Recommendations:**

The User Agency is continuously using the forest land (Delisted area of section 4 of PLPA 1900) proposed for diversion and permanent structures has been constructed. As the structures have already been constructed and are operating; as per prevailing provisions under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 the instant case is for post-facto approval, wherein, the forest land has been already used for non-forest purpose.

- XVI. **Recommendation of DDGF (C), Regional Office, Chandigarh:**

The proposal is for diversion of 0.9606 ha forest land proposed for construction of Hotel Badhani Country Side on Pathankot to Dalhousie Road District Pathankot, Punjab. The proposal has been recommended by the State Government; accordingly same is recommended for consideration in the Advisory Committee as per the extant Rules and Guidelines issued under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980.

- xxiv. The Committee was informed that after examination of the proposal it is observed that Ministry vide letter dated 24.07.2009 delisted

55,339.95 ha cultivated and habitation area closed under PLPA, 1900 for bonafide use of agriculture and for sustaining the livelihood of the people/owner of the land. The instant proposal seeking regularization of structures constructed is therefore a violation on account of change of land use in contravention to the prescribed land use. Therefore, as per para 1.16 (iv) of consolidated guidelines, any violation of change in land use, penalty of two times the NPV plus simple interest 12% from the date of actual violation committed needs be imposed. The Committee noted the same.

8. **Decision of the Advisory Committee:** The Committee after detailed discussion and deliberation with the DDGF (Central), Regional Office, Chandigarh and officials from Government of Punjab, recommended the proposal for grant of '*in-principle*' approval for diversion of 0.9606 ha. of forest land for construction of Hotel Badhani Country Side on Pathankot to Dalhousie road Km 20 left/side at Village- Bhamrota, Khasra No. 387,388,389 delisted area of section 4 of PLPA 1900 Tehsil - Dhar Kalan, Forest Division and District Pathankot in the State of Punjab subject to the general, standard and following specific conditions:

- iii. The User Agency shall pay two (2) times penal NPV for the extent of violation done plus 12 percent simple interest from the date of actual violation committed till the deposit is made by the User Agency.

### **Agenda No. 15 (Policy Issues)**

#### **Policy Issue No.1**

**Sub: Formulation of policy/guidelines for Penal Compensatory Afforestation (PCA) to ensure transparency, rationality and uniformity while imposing condition of raising penal CA in proposals involving violation of Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 (F. No. 813/UP/06/34/2018-FC). (File No. 11/126/2024-FC)**

The Policy Agenda was deferred by the Advisory Committee due to paucity of time.

#### **Policy Issue No.2**

**Sub: Clarifications sought by the Regional Office, Bhopal on the applicability of compensatory afforestation - reg.**

The Policy Agenda was deferred by the Advisory Committee due to paucity of time.

### Policy Issue No. 3

**Subject: Assignment of forest land on lease to Pulp and Paper Industries for raising captive plantations - reg. (File No. 11/140/2025-FC)**

The Policy Agenda was deferred by the Advisory Committee due to paucity of time.

### Policy Issue No.4

**Sub: Issues related to Goa matters pertaining to use of private forest land for Compensatory Afforestation and the transfer of approval granted to erstwhile lessee to new lessee - regarding. (File No. 11/125/2025-FC)**

1. The above stated agenda item was considered by the Advisory Committee in its meeting held on 25.08.2025. The DDGF (Central), from various Regional Officers, and Nodal Officers of the States also attended the meeting.
2. The Member Secretary briefed the Advisory Committee about the issue and development took place in the matter.
3. The Advisory Committee, after deliberations noted the following:
  - (i) The State Government of Goa, through a DO dated 25.06.2025 and letter dated 28.04.2025 referred the issues related to use of private forest land for Compensatory Afforestation and the transfer of approval granted to erstwhile lessee to new lessee for the consideration of the Ministry.
  - (ii) The issues referred by the Government of Goa were also deliberated with between the Government of Goa and MoEF&CC on 4.07.2025. A brief background of the issue referred by the Government of Goa for the consideration of the Ministry are given as under:
    - (a) **Use of Private Forest land for raising Compensatory Afforestation:** Guidelines provide that the revenue lands/zudpi jungle/chhote/bade jhar ka jungle/jungle-jhari land/civil-soyam lands and all other such categories of lands, on which the provisions of FC Act, 1980 are applicable, shall be considered for the purpose of compensatory afforestation provided such lands on which compensatory afforestation is proposed shall be notified as Reserve Forest (RF) under the Indian Forest Act, 1927.
    - (b) **Vesting of erstwhile Forest Clearances into the new leaseholders for iron ore mining:** Section 8 B of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2021. 88 mining leases renewed by the Govt of Goa were cancelled by Hon'ble SC. The same are being auctioned now and highest bidders take it. MoEF & CC has declared that the ECs obtained earlier stands cancelled, hence not available for new Lessee. No clarity on Forest Clearance and Wildlife Clearance. State just wants to ensure that FC and WL clearance continues and available to the new Lessee.
  - (iii) Private lands are notified under section 35 of the Indian Forest Act or local Forest Act for the special purpose of protection such as protection against storms, winds, soil degradation, land slides, erosion, fire, cultivation, grazing, etc. Private Forest, although notified are managed by the private entities and not by the Forests Department. Provisions of section 35 of the IFA, 1927 does not notify such land as forest but notify them for aforementioned purposes and the accordingly, the owner of the land requires to manage them for the

purpose they are notified. Private Forest land are recorded as forests in the Government records.

- (iv) Provisions of Rules 13(3)(a) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Rules, 2023 land recorded as forest in the Government records but not notified as forest under any law and not managed by the Forest Department viz. revenue lands or zudpi jungle or chhote-bade jhar ka jungle or jungle-jhari land or civil-soyam or orange forest lands and all other such categories of forest lands, can also be used for raising CA provided they are transferred and mutated in the name of State Forest Department and are provided double in extent to the forest land being diverted;
- (v) As the Private forest lands are recorded as forests in government records, the provisions of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 are applicable on such lands like other non-notified forest land such as lands recorded as forests in Government records. Therefore, private forest lands may be considered at par with the revenue forest lands for the purpose of raising compensatory afforestation, provided they are provided double in extent to the forest land being diverted and transferred and mutated or notified as PF under Indian Forest Act, 1927.
- (vi) Further with regards to transfer of approvals granted to erstwhile under the Adhiniyam to new lessee after the acution of the cancelled mines, thje Committee noted that Guidelines given under para 7.4(vi) of the Consolidated Guidelines provides the procedure, in respect of Category 'C' mines of Karnataka, for transfer of approval in respect of mining leases which were cancelled by the Hon'ble Supreme Court and subsequently allotted to successful bidders through auction process. Therefore, in respect of iron ore leases of Goa, which are akin to the Category 'C' mines, the transfer of approval granted under the Adhiniyam to erstwhile lessee can be transferred at the level of Central Government.
- (vii) In a reply dated 17.07.2025 from Hon'ble MEFCC to DO letter dated 25.06.2026 received from Hon'ble Chief Minister, Goa, it was conveyed by the Hon'ble Minister that clarification in the matter will be issued by the Ministry.

4. **Decision of the Advisory Committee:** The Committee after detailed discussion and deliberation with the DDGF (Central), from various Regional Officers, recommended the following:

- (i) Private forest lands may be considered for the purpose of raising compensatory afforestation, provided these lands are recorded as forest lands in Government records and are treated as forest lands under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan), Adhiniyam 1980. In such cases, these private forest lands may be used for compensatory afforestation and double in extent to the forest land being diverted, and are transferred and mutated and subsequently notified as PF under Indian Forest Act, 1927/ local forest Act, as per the provisions of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Rules, 2023 and Guidelines issued thereunder.
- (ii) Transfer of approval of mining leases which were cancelled by the Hon'ble Supreme Court and subsequently, auctioned to successful bidders in Goa, the Ministry may consider transfer of approval granted under the Adhiniyam from the erstwhile lessee to the new lessee in line with the provision of the guidelines given under para 7.4 (vi) of the

Consolidated Guidelines and Clarifications issued by the Ministry on 29.12.2023.

### Policy Issue No.5

**Sub: Regarding request for modification /change of condition stage-II forest clearance granted to wind power project from existing lease grant of 15 years to 30 years.**

1. The above stated agenda item was considered by the Advisory Committee in its meeting held on 25.08.2025. The DDGF (Central), from various Regional Officers, and Nodal Officers of the States also attended the meeting.
2. The Member Secretary briefed the Advisory Committee about the issue and development took place in the matter.
3. The Advisory Committee, after deliberations noted the following:
  - (i) The Government of Karnataka has sought a clarification on the applicability of penal NPV in case of wind power projects i.e. whether the penal NPV @ 50% of NPV which is applicable to wind power projects or penal NPV @ of normal NPV is to be applied in wind power projects. A brief background of the matter is as under:
    - (a) A proposal involving diversion of 221.80 ha of forest land in Chitradurga District of Karnataka was granted approval on 2.04.2003 for construction of a Wind Power project in favour of Karnataka Renewable Energy Development Limited (KREDL) for a period of 15 years.
    - (b) Subsequently, the validity of approval was extended to another 15 years by the MoEF&CC on 9.05.2025 inter-alia stipulating the following conditions:
      - (iii) *The User Agency shall pay the two (2) times penal NPV for the extent of violation done (i.e. 45.272 Ha).*
      - (iv) *The User Agency shall pay two times penal NPV plus simple interest of 12 per cent from the date of actual violation for violation on account of change of land use of 35.082 ha.*
    - (c) Penal NPV was prescribed as the user agency has used the 45.772 ha of forest land beyond the approved area due to deviation or shift in the area thereby keeping the total area diverted within the limit of 221.80 ha. Said deviation or shift without the prior approval was considered as violation and accordingly penal provisions were stipulated in the approval granted by the Ministry based on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee.
    - (d) As per the order dated 28.03.2008 of the Hon'ble Supreme Court and guidelines issued by the MoEF&CC, the 50% of normal minimum rates of NPV are applicable in case of wind power projects. Accordingly, the State Government has sought a clarification that whether the penal NPV are to be charged @ 50% of NPV which is applicable to wind power projects or penal NPV @ of normal NPV is to be applied.

- (ii) The relevant guidelines pertaining to violation of the Adhiniyam on account of change in the approved land use, are given as under:
- (iii) *Violation/non-compliance of any conditions imposed while granting approval under The Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam:*
- (a) *In such cases the penalty will be imposed on the recommendation of the Dy. Director General of Forests (Central), Regional Office in whose jurisdiction the alleged violation has occurred. The violation will be reported to REC/AC and the committee will give time to comply the conditions within stipulated time.*
- (b) *In case the offence is proved then the penalty shall be imposed for violation committed over forest area without approval equal to twice the normal NPV.*
- (iv) *Violation on account of change of land use: Any violation of change in land use, other than mining operations, penalty of two times the NPV plus simple interest 12 per cent from the date of actual violation committed will be imposed.*
- (iii) The guidelines regarding levying of penal provisions do not mention charging of 50% penal NPV of NPV, as applicable to a particular project such as wind power projects. Guidelines uniformly prescribe penal NPV shall be equal to NPV of forest land. The Committee opined that penal NPV whenever levied it is to be charged in respect of forest land used in the violation @ of normal or full NPV.
4. **Decision of the Committee:** The Committee after detailed discussion and deliberation with the DDGF (Central), from various Regional Officers, recommended that in the extant case violation has been proved on account of deviation or shifting of the forest which was not covered in the approval granted by the Ministry. Further, the guidelines issued by the Ministry on charging penal NPV do not mention any relaxation of 50% NPV of NPV, as applicable to a particular project such as wind power projects. Therefore, in view of the existing provisions of the guidelines, the penal NPV should be considered @ full NPV of the forest land used in violation and should accordingly, be charged for forest area used in the violation of the conditions stipulated in the Adhiniyam.

### Policy issue No.6

**Sub: Enhancement of number of exempted boreholes in the forest area based on study conducted by the IIFM, Bhopal to assess the impact of survey and exploration of minerals on forests and wildlife (F. No. FC-11/79/2023-FC)**

1. The above stated agenda item was considered by the Advisory Committee in its meeting held on 25.08.2025. The DDGF (Central), from various Regional Officers, and Nodal Officers of the States also attended the meeting.
2. The Member Secretary briefed the Advisory Committee about the issue and development took place in the matter.
3. The Advisory Committee, after deliberations noted the following:

- (i) This relates to a scientific study conducted by the IIFM, Bhopal to assess the number of bore holes for undertaking prospecting/exploratory drilling which can be permitted in the forest area without keeping in view the impact of the activity in the forest land.
- (ii) As per existing guidelines issued by the Ministry on 29.11.2023 drilling of up to 25 bore holes per 10 sq km and 80 shot holes per sq km with felling of trees up to 100 in the entire area proposed for survey and exploration is exempted from the purview of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980.
- (iii) The Ministry of Mines and Ministry of Coal, keeping view the fact that large part of the exploration area falls under forest cover, had sought intervention from MoEF&CC for the proposal of enhancement of boreholes/shot holes in the forest areas.
- (iv) The matter was considered in the meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Coordination and Monitoring Committee (ICMC) held on 18.03.2024 wherein it was decided that the study may be conducted by the IIFM, Bhopal along with CMPDIL and GSI under the aegis of the Ministry of Mines.
- (v) The IIFM Bhopal vide their communication dated 19.08.2025 submitted the report of the study to the Ministry.
- (vi) Summary of recommendations made in the report with regards to enhancement of number of bore holes is given as under:

**(A) For Bedded Stratiform and Tabular Deposits**

- (i) Increase in the number of bore holes to 62 boreholes of up-to 6 inch diameter per 10 sq km with a maximum of 16 bore holes per sq km have been recommended in the forest area with canopy density of up to 0.4.
- (ii) For moderately dense and very dense forests with canopy density of more than 0.4, the maximum number of recommended bore holes may proportionately be reduced by 25% which will translate to 47 bore holes per 10 sq km.

**(B) For Lenticular Ore Bodies of all Dimensions**

- (i) Increase in the number to 80 boreholes of up-to 6" diameter per 10 sq km with a maximum of 25 boreholes per sq km have been recommended in the forest area with canopy density of up to 0.4.
- (ii) For moderately dense and very dense forests with canopy density of more than 0.4. the maximum number of recommended bore holes may proportionately be reduced by 25% which will translate to 60 bore hole per 10 sq km.

**(C) Enhancement of number of Shot Holes for Seismic Surveys:** Increase in number of shot hole to 250 shots per sq km and 62.5 shots per line km have been recommended from existing 80 shot holes per sq km.

**(D) In addition to above, mitigation measures to be undertaken by the exploring agencies have also been suggested in the report.**

- (vii) The Director, IIFM Bhopal informed the following to the Committee:
  - (a) Committee that generally an area of 60 meter x 30 meters is required for carrying out the exploratory drilling. Drilling of one bore and associated activities at bore hole site is completed within a period of one to two weeks and thereafter, the bore hole is plugged to prevent any wildlife accidentally falling into the bore hole.

- (b) The Committee was further informed that since the bore hole drilling is a temporary activity lasting for around 15-20 days at each site, it does not create any long term impacts on the wildlife. However, the noise created by the rig can disturb the wildlife and force them to change their movement paths. Impacts can occur on the riparian ecosystems if water is blocked and abstracted from the forested stream, it can result into discharge of oil and grease into the natural water stream which can have negative impacts on aquatic wildlife species. Accordingly, it has been recommended to limit the drilling to 9:00 AM-5:30 PM, aligning with diurnal wildlife patterns.
- (c) Given the temporary nature of the activity, there are no perceptible or visible changes in the forest land. The area is total restored to its original state after a period of one month.
- (d) Based on the findings, during the filed visits, it has been recommended to consider 62 bore holes for bedded and stratiform deposits and 80 bore holes for lenticular bore holes up to a diameters of 6 inches.
- (e) With regards to Seismic Surveys, no site was available for the visit of the team. However, based on deliberations held with the GSI and CMDIL in light of the existing norms for seismic surveys and required precision, increase in bore holes from existing 80 shot holes to 250 holes have been proposed by the CMPDIL. However, in view of the fact that it requires rigorous validation in field as it involves use of explosives, drilling of large number of shot soles, human and machine presence in the forested areas and in the absence of any seismic survey activity going on in the forested area it was not possible to conduct any assessment of this activity on forest and wildlife and hence no recommendation could be made in this regard.
- (f) Implementation of mitigation measures, as suggested in the report, should be ensured by the user agency after completion of the survey and exploration activity in the forest area.
- (viii) The Committee a further noted that boreholes drilled in forest areas, once drilling activities are completed, can be effectively utilized as groundwater recharge structures, provided they are scientifically refilled with suitable material in accordance with established recharge methods. Therefore, the user agency may convert the boreholes into ground water recharge points in such areas where the local Forest Department desires to create such ground water recharge points.
- (ix) With regard to the ceiling of 16 and 25 boreholes per sq. km, as recommended in the report, the Committee observed that the Ministry, considering the difficulties in implementing such provisions, has already clarified in its guidelines dated 17.01.2025 and 07.04.2025 that the number of boreholes in a prospecting area should be determined based on the requirement of the user agency and not on a pro rata basis. Accordingly, prescribing two separate values, as suggested in the report, may create ambiguity during implementation. Therefore, it would be appropriate for the Ministry to prescribe a single ceiling of up to 25 boreholes per sq. km.

5. **Decision of the Committee:** The Advisory Committee, after deliberations noted the following: The Committee after detailed discussion and deliberation on the

recommendations made in the report of the IIFM, Bhopal, recommended the following:

- (i) For undertaking survey and explorations in the forest area, the following bore holes per 10 sq km may be considered under exempted category by the Ministry:
  - (a) For bedded stratiform and tabular deposits, **62 bore holes of upto 6 inch diameter per 10 sq km** subject to maximum boreholes of up to **25 per sq km**.
  - (b) For Lenticular ore bodies of all dimensions, **80 bore holes of upto 6 inch diameter per 10 sq km** subject to maximum boreholes of up to **25 per sq km**.
- (ii) The agencies involved in the survey and exploration shall ensure the following mitigation measures during and after completion of the activity:
  - (a) To ensure minimum impact of the drilling and other associated activities on wildlife, the survey and exploration activities including drilling shall be limited to 9.00 AM to 5.30 PM to align with diurnal pattern of the wildlife.
  - (b) To ensure ecological rehabilitation of the site, plugging of the boreholes may be carried out after completion of the borehole and related activities including borehole geophysical logging, gamma ray logging etc. The plugging shall be carried out with cement immediately after completion of all borehole related activities to ensure the integrity of the well and geological formations.
  - (c) In case the Forest Department desires to use the bore hole as a ground water recharge points, the boreholes drilled in forest areas, upon completion of drilling activities, shall be refilled with suitable material in accordance with established scientific methods, so that they may serve as effective groundwater recharge structures.
  - (d) To the extent possible, the user agency should avoid felling of trees and wherever possible the location of drilling pit should be shifted to avoid densely vegetated area. Felling of trees and clearing of bushes, wherever required should be undertaken in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Ministry in this regard.
  - (e) The agencies should optimise their drilling infrastructure and spatial planning by deploying modular rig to minimise ground disturbances.
  - (f) Sump created at site should be managed by adopting scientifically and technically sound practices. A biodegradable liners of more than 2mm thick should be deployed to prevent subsurface contamination. The plastic liner (if non biodegradable) used in the sump should be properly removed and taken out of the borehole site and disposed of properly or reused and recycled as per Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016.
  - (g) In order to mitigate the environmental impact, proper disposal of drilling fluid, containing synthetic polymers and bentonite should be properly discharged and dried in the sump pit. Suitable lining to the pits will be provided to maintain integrity and prevent any leakage. Pits will be backfilled and levelled by the user agency before leaving the site.

- (h) Efforts should be made to source start up water through water tankers outside the forest areas avoiding use of existing sources of water in the forest like streams, nallah and ponds, etc. Waste water generated from drilling circulation should not be discharged to nalahs, streams, creeks or natural drainage lines to prevent contamination of water bodies.
- (i) Team deployed in the exploratory drilling, transportation of pipes and other materials including water should not camp inside the forests and only one or two persons should be allowed to stay inside the forest for watch and ward of the camp site during night time;
- (j) All the exploration activities should have a work plan duly approved by a competent authority of the exploration agency and any modification in the work plan as the exploration progresses may be intimated to the local forest authorities.
- (k) A standard operating procedure (Annexure-I) should be followed to have uniformity in mineral exploration activities.

## **Annexure-I**

### **Standard Operating Procedures for mineral exploration activities in forest areas**

This Standard Operating Procedures establishes comprehensive procedures for conducting environmentally responsible mineral exploration drilling operations within forest areas. The document provides systematic guidelines for minimizing ecological impact while maintaining operational efficiency through the implementation of advanced drilling technologies, stringent waste management protocols, evidence-based habitat restoration techniques, and innovative ecological monitoring systems.

The enhanced procedures outlined herein have demonstrated measurable environmental benefits, including up to 40% reduction in vegetation clearance requirements, 89% native vegetation recovery rates within four months of operation completion, and 67% increase in small mammal movement through established biodiversity corridors. The integration of realtime monitoring systems and community-based ecological oversight provides additional environmental safeguards while ensuring regulatory compliance and social acceptability.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background and Rationale**

Mineral exploration activities in forest areas present environmental challenges that require careful balance between resource assessment needs and ecological conservation imperatives. The increasing demand for mineral resources, coupled with heightened environmental awareness, regulatory requirements, and community concerns, necessitates the development of enhanced standardized operating procedures that minimize environmental impact while ensuring effective exploration outcomes.

The integration of modern drilling technologies, advanced waste management systems, real-time ecological monitoring, and scientifically validated restoration techniques provides a comprehensive framework for sustainable mineral exploration practices. This Standard Operating Procedure synthesizes best practices derived from successful field implementations across various forest ecosystems in India, incorporating lessons learned from operations in Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand, and Central India, while integrating cutting-edge ecological monitoring and community engagement.

### **1.2 Scope of Application**

The Standard Operating Procedure applies to all personnel, contractors, and stakeholders involved in mineral exploration activities within forest areas, encompassing strategic planning, ecological sensitivity mapping, site preparation, drilling operations, waste management, real-time environmental monitoring, community engagement, and comprehensive site restoration activities.

## **2. STRATEGIC PLANNING AND OPERATION**

### **2.1. Strategic Phased Drilling Approach**

The implementation of a comprehensive phased drilling methodology represents a fundamental advancement from traditional exploration approaches. The 10 sq. km operational area is divided into strategic phased sub-blocks, with borehole density increased gradually based on findings from earlier phases. This approach reduces widespread simultaneous disturbance while allowing for adaptive management based on real-time environmental feedback.

Phase 1 implementation involves initial reconnaissance drilling at reduced density (3-4 boreholes per sq. km) to establish baseline geological understanding while minimizing initial environmental impact. Subsequent phases incorporate lessons learned from initial operations, with density increases only in areas where geological indicators justify intensive exploration.

### **2.3 Exclusion Zones and Protection Areas**

No drilling is allowed within high-sensitivity areas to ensure protection of ecological hotspots which include

1. Critical wildlife breeding and nesting areas
2. Water sources and riparian zones
3. High-biodiversity forest patches
4. Areas with endangered or endemic species populations
5. Culturally or religiously significant forest areas

### **2.4 Seasonal Restrictions**

Drilling may be avoided during sensitive periods like breeding seasons, migration periods, monsoon seasons, and species-specific vulnerable periods.

### **2.5 Manual Site Preparation and Zero Tree Felling**

Cutting of trees is avoided. Sometimes, lopping of branches, clearing of bushes is required for movement of drilling machine to the desired location.

If the drilling point, as per the grid, is falling on a densely forested patch of land, the point may be shifted to a nearby open ground, based on the geological considerations to avoid cutting of trees. However, if such shifting is not possible, tree cutting will be limited to maximum permissible limit as per rules.

### **2.6. Existing Path Utilization**

Access route planning emphasizes the utilization of existing forest trails, fire lines, or previously disturbed areas wherever possible to avoid new road creation. This approach has demonstrated significant reductions in habitat fragmentation and soil compaction issues commonly associated with exploration activities. The routes are selected in such a way to minimize additional environmental impact while ensuring safe equipment access.

### **3. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT**

#### **3.1 Zero Waste Management**

Strict zero waste procedure ensure complete collection and offsite disposal of all plastic waste, drilling fluids, and other non-biodegradable materials. No waste materials are left to remain within forest areas upon completion of drilling.

#### **3.2 Sump Design and Fluid Management**

Standardized sump construction incorporates enhanced leak-proof design features including dimensions of 3 meters by 2.5 meters by 1-meter depth, with biodegradable high-density polyethylene liners or reusable plastic liners of minimum 2 mm thickness reinforced with secondary containment systems. All sumps are immediately reclaimed post-use with complete liner removal and soil restoration.

Explore the use of closed-loop water systems with proper monitoring to demonstrate significant environmental benefits, reducing tanker transportation requirements and associated emissions.

#### **3.3 Eco-friendly Additives and Chemical Management**

Replacement of synthetic polymers with biodegradable drilling additives wherever feasible reduces long-term environmental impact. Prohibition of petroleum-based drilling fluids and additives throughout all operational phases ensures soil and groundwater protection.

Chemical inventory and management systems track all materials brought into forest areas, ensuring complete removal upon operation completion.

#### **3.4 Water Resource Protection**

Complete prohibition of water extraction from all forest water sources, including streams, nallahs, rivers, ponds, and waterholes, ensures protection of critical wildlife habitat and maintains hydrological integrity. All water requirements must be supplied through external tanker services with documented sourcing from approved non-forest sources.

#### **3.5 Wildlife Habitat Protection**

Prior to drilling, conduct reconnaissance to identify the critical habitat areas requiring special protection measures in consultation with forest department personnel to avoid selecting such areas. Implementation of noise reduction measures may be during drilling operations minimizes disturbance to wildlife and their behavioral patterns.

Coordination with forest department personnel ensures awareness about sensitive wildlife areas and seasonal activity patterns that may require modifications or temporary cessation of activities.

#### **4. COMPREHENSIVE SITE RESTORATION AND ECOLOGICAL REHABILITATION**

##### **4.1 Proper Borehole Sealing and Site Stabilization**

All boreholes are sealed with inert materials and capped at surface level to prevent wildlife injury and groundwater contamination. Immediate borehole backfilling on completion of drilling needs to be ensured.

##### **4.2 Site Restoration**

Use native species for revegetation of drilling site. Species selection is based on species present in the nearby areas.

#### **5. PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT AND ENHANCED OPERATIONAL SAFETY**

##### **5.1 Minimized Personnel Presence and Forest Access**

Minimum presence of personnel within forest areas minimize human impact on wildlife and reduce the risk of human-wildlife conflicts. Keep only a skeletal manpower for protection of the equipment at site, and other team members may camp outside the forest boundaries, with daily transportation of personnel for operational activities.

##### **5.2 Training and Competency Requirements**

Comprehensive training programs may be provided to ensure all personnel understand environmental protection requirements, emergency response procedures, wildlife safety norms, and community engagement guidelines. Training modules include environmental awareness, waste management procedures, equipment operation safety, wildlife encounter, etc.

##### **5.3 Comprehensive Emergency Response**

Emergency response procedures may be adopted to address potential environmental incidents, wildlife encounters and equipment failures. Spill response requires immediate containment using deployed spill response kits.

Wildlife encounter procedures emphasize personnel safety while minimizing wildlife disturbance through immediate cessation of operations, and maintenance of safe distance.

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