

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

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,
Jorbagh Road, Aliganj
New Delhi – 110003

Dated: 28th November, 2023

To

The Addl. Chief Secretary (Forests),
Government of Odisha
Bhubaneswar.


Sub: Proposal for seeking prior approval under Section 2 (ii) of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 in favour of M/s Rungta Mines Ltd. for non-forestry use of 156.978 ha of forest land (147.803 ha in Bonai Forest Division & 9.175 ha in Keonjhar Forest Division) for iron ore mining and ancillary activities within Jumka Pathiriposhi Pahar Iron Ore Block under Bonai and Keonjhar Forest Division of Sundargarh District, Odisha– (Online proposal No. FP/OR/MIN/150048/2021) reg.

Madam/Sir,

I am directed to refer to the Government of Odisha's letter No 10F (Cons)-12/2023 dated 03.03.2023 on the above subject seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Section 2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and additional information submitted vide letter No. 14465 /9F (MG)-4/2023 dated 18.07.2023 and letter No. 18984/9F (MG)-04/2023 dated 21.09.2023 as sought by the Ministry vide its letter of even number dated 29.03.2023 and 21.09.2023 and to say that the proposal has been examined by the Advisory Committee constituted by the Central Government under Section - 3 of the aforesaid Act.

2. After careful examination of the proposal of the Government of Odisha and on the basis of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, and approval of the same by the competent authority of the MoEF&CC, New Delhi, the Central Government hereby accords '**in-principle**' approval under Section - 2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 in favour of M/s Rungta Mines Ltd. for non-forestry use of 156.978 ha of forest land (147.803 ha in Bonai Forest Division & 9.175 ha in Keonjhar Forest Division) for iron ore mining and ancillary activities within Jumka Pathiriposhi Pahar Iron Ore Block under Bonai and Keonjhar Forest Division of Sundargarh District, Odisha subject to the fulfillment of the following conditions:

1. Legal status of the diverted forest land shall remain unchanged;
2. **Compensatory Afforestation:**
 - a. The User Agency shall transfer the cost of raising and maintaining the compensatory afforestation as per the approved CA Scheme at the current wage rate in consultation with State Forest Department in the account of CAMPA of the concerned State through online portal;
 - b. The Govt. non-forest land identified for raising Compensatory Afforestation shall be notified by the State Government as RF under Section-4 or PF


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under Section-29 of the Indian Forest Act. 1927 or under the relevant Section (s) of the local Forest Act, as the case may be, before the Stage-II approval;

- c. The cost of survey, demarcation and erection of permanent pillars, if required on the identified CA land, shall be deposited in advance with the Forest Department by the user agency. The CA will be maintained for 10 years. The scheme may include afforestation of indigenous species with appropriate provision for anticipated cost increase for works scheduled for subsequent years;
- d. The compensatory afforestation over non-forest land, equal in extent to the forest land being diverted i.e. 156.978 ha, and over 183.722 ha degraded forest land for balance seedlings shall be raised by the State Forest Department at the project cost within three years from the date of grant of Stage - II approval;
- e. User agency either himself or through the State Forest Department shall undertake gap planting and soil & moisture conservation activities to restock and rejuvenate the degraded open forests (having crown density less than 0.40), if any, located in the area within 100 meter from outer perimeter of the mining lease. The plan for plantation and SMC activities will be prepared and submitted to MoEF &CC before Stage-II Clearance;

3. NPV:


- a. The User Agency shall transfer the funds towards the cost of Net Present Value (NPV) of the forest land being diverted under this proposal from the User Agency as per the orders of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India dated 28.03.2008, 24.04.2008 and 09.05.2008 in Writ Petition (Civil) No. 202/1995 and the guidelines issued by this Ministry vide its letter No. 5-3/2007-FC dated 06.01.2022 read with 22.03.2022 through online portal of CAMPA account of the State Concerned;
- b. At the time of payment of the Net Present Value (NPV) at the present rate, the user agency shall furnish an undertaking to pay the additional amount of NPV, if so determined, as per the final decision of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India;

4. *Since a holistic proposal indicating the ancillary facilities i.e. road and transmission line was not submitted by the State Government and the proposal for road and Transmission are applied for by the User Agency and under process, the same can be processed by Regional Office but final approval will be given after grant of final approval in the instant case. Further, the State government shall submit only holistic proposals in future including of all linear and ancillary proposals w.r.t. to main proposal in future.*
5. *Total number of the trees affected will be enumerated and report will be submitted at the time of the compliance. With regard to the illegal felling and shifting cultivation observed at the project site, committee shall be constituted by the State Government under an officer not below the rank of APCCF level to enquire the matter and take appropriate action. A report shall be submitted to the Ministry in this regard.*
6. *As per the recommendation of the NEERI report the State Government shall explore the possibility for transportation of iron ore through conveyor belt and take a reasoned decision.*
7. *The State Government shall ensure that the rate of RWMP /SSWCP which was revised by the State Govt. vide letter dated 05.12.2018, will be further revised in view of the factors such as wage rates and inflation etc. and accordingly the revised Wildlife Management Plans having long term mitigation strategy, plan and*

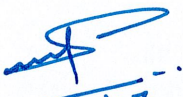

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monitoring mechanism with respect to Human-elephant conflict in the landscape, duly approved by the CWLW will be submitted at the time of compliance.

8. *A green strip of 100 meters including safety zone of approximately five hectares on the southern tip of the mining lease area will be kept intact as green belt for shelter, cover and movement of the wildlife.*
9. Compensatory levies to be realized from the User Agency under the project shall be transferred/ deposited, through e-challan, in to the account of CAMPA pertaining to the State concerned through e-portal (<https://parivesh.nic.in/>);
10. The KML files of diverted area, the CA areas, the proposed SMC treatment area and the WLMP area shall be uploaded on the e-Green watch portal along with GPS Ids and all other requisite details prior to Stage II approval;
11. Following activities, as per approved plan / schemes, shall be undertaken in the lease area by the User Agency under the supervision of the State Forest Department. Approved scheme/plan shall be submitted to the Ministry along with compliance of Stage-I approval:
 - a. Mitigative measures to minimize soil erosion and choking of stream shall be implemented within a period of three years with effect from the issue of Stage-II clearance in accordance with the approved Plan in consultation with the State Forest Department;
 - b. Planting of adequate drought hardy plant species and sowing of seeds, in the appropriate area within the mining lease to arrest soil erosion in accordance with the approved scheme;
 - c. Construction of check dams, retention /toe walls to arrest sliding down of the excavated material along the contour in accordance with the approved scheme;
 - d. Stabilize the overburden dumps by appropriate grading/benching, in accordance with the approved scheme, so as to ensure that angles of repose at any given place is less than 28° ; and
12. **Safety Zone Management:** Following activities, at project cost, shall be undertaken by the user agency for the management of safety zone as per relevant guidelines issued by the Ministry's guidelines:
 - a. User agency shall ensure demarcation of safety zone (7.5-meter strip all along the inner boundary of the mining lease area), and its fencing, protection and regeneration by erecting adequate number of 6 feet high RCC boundary pillars inscribed with DGPS coordinates with barbed wire fencing and deploying adequate number of watchers under the supervision of the State Forest Department;
 - b. Boundary of the safety zone of the mining lease, adjacent to habitation/roads, should be properly fenced by the user agency;
 - c. Safety zone shall be maintained as green belt around mining lease and to ensure dense canopy in the area, regeneration shall be taken up in this area by the user agency at project cost under the supervision of the State Forest Department;
 - d. The State Government and the user agency shall ensure that safety zone is maintained as per the prescribed norms;
13. No damage shall be caused to the top-soil and the user agency will follow the top soil management plan;
14. The User Agency shall prepare a list of existing village tanks and other water bodies with GPS co-ordinates located within five km from the mine lease boundary. This list is to be duly verified by the concerned Divisional Forest Officer. The User Agency shall regularly undertake desilting of these village tanks and


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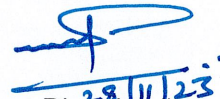
- other water bodies so as to mitigate the impact of siltation of such tanks/water bodies. A detailed approved plan for desilting of identified ponds and water bodies to be prepared in consultation with forest department and shall be submitted to MoEF & CC before Stage-II approval;
15. The cost of felling of trees shall be deposited by the User Agency with the State Forest Department;
 16. Trees should be felled in phased manner as per the requirement in the approved Mining Plan with prior permission of concerned DFO;
 17. The user agency shall explore the possibility of translocation of maximum number of trees identified to be felled and shall ensure that any tree felling shall be done only when it is unavoidable and that too under strict supervision of the State Forest Department.
 18. A site-specific Wildlife Management Plan shall be prepared by the State Government in consultation with the PCCF (Wildlife) for the protection and conservation of wildlife of the area. A copy of approved Plan shall be submitted to the Ministry along with the compliance of Stage-I approval. Entire cost of implementation of the provisions of the Wildlife Management Plan shall be deposited into the account of CAMPA of the State;
 19. State Government shall complete settlement of rights, in term of the Scheduled Tribes and Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, if any, on the forest land to be diverted and submit the documentary evidence, along with compliance of Stage-I approval, as prescribed by this Ministry's letter No. 11-9/1998-FC (Pt.) dated 03.08.2009 read with 05.07.2013, in support thereof;
 20. The User Agency shall undertake mining in a phased manner after taking due care for reclamation of the mined over area. The concurrent reclamation plan as per the approved mining plan shall be executed by the User Agency from the very first year, and an annual report on implementation thereof shall be submitted to the Nodal Officer, Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, in the concerned State Government and the concerned Regional Office of the Ministry. If it is found from the annual report that the activities indicated in the concurrent reclamation plan are not being executed by the User Agency, the Nodal Officer or the concern Addl. Principle Chief Conservator of Forests (Central) may direct that the mining activities shall remain suspended till such time, such reclamation activities area satisfactorily executed;
 21. The User Agency shall comply with the Hon'ble Supreme Court order on re-grassing, and re-grass the mining area and any other areas which may have been disturbed due to mining to restore them to a condition which is fit for growth of fodder, flora, fauna, etc. in a timely manner;
 22. Period of diversion of the said forest land under this approval shall be for a period co-terminus with the period of the mining lease proposed to be granted under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, as amended time to time and the Rules framed there-under;
 23. The User Agency shall obtain the Environment Clearance as per the provisions of the Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986, if required;
 24. No labour camp shall be established on the forest land and the User Agency shall provide fuels preferably alternate fuels to the labourers and the staff working at the site so as to avoid any damage and pressure on the nearby forest areas;
 25. The boundary of the diverted forest land, mining lease and safety zone, as applicable, shall be demarcated on ground at the project cost, by erecting four feet high reinforced cement concrete pillars, each inscribed with its serial number, distance from pillar to pillar and GPS coordinates;
 26. The layout plan of the mining plan/ proposal shall not be changed without the prior


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- approval of the Central Government and the forest land shall not be used for any purpose other than that specified in the proposal;
27. The forest land proposed to be diverted shall under no circumstances be transferred to any other agency, department or person without prior approval of the Central Government;
 28. No damage to the flora and fauna of the adjoining area shall be caused;
 29. The User Agency shall submit the annual self-compliance report in respect of the above stated conditions to the State Government, concerned Regional Office and to this Ministry by the end of March every year regularly;
 30. Any other condition that the concerned Regional Office of this Ministry may stipulate with the approval of competent authority in the interest of conservation, protection and development of forests & wildlife; and
 31. The user agency shall comply all the provisions of the all Acts, Rules, Regulations, Guidelines, Hon'ble Court Order (s) and NGT Order (s) pertaining to this project, if any, for the time being in force, as applicable to the project.
 32. Violation of any of these conditions will amount to violation of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and action would be taken as prescribed in para 1.21 of Chapter 1 of the Handbook of comprehensive guidelines of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 as issued by this Ministry's letter No. 5-2/2017-FC dated 28.03.2019.
 33. The compliance report shall be uploaded on **e-portal** (<https://parivesh.nic.in/>).

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

Yours faithfully,



(Suneet Bhardwa)

Assistant Inspector General of Forests

Copy to:

1. PCCF (HoFF), State Forest Department, Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar
2. PCCF & Nodal Officer (FCA), O/o PCCF, State Forest Department, Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar
3. DDGF (Central), Regional Office of MoEF&CC at Bhubaneswar.
4. User Agency.
5. Monitoring Cell, FC Division, MoEF&CC, New Delhi
6. Guard File.