

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

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan
Jor Bagh Road, Aliganj
New Delhi – 110003
Dated: 21-08-2024

To

The Addl. Chief Secretary (Forests),
Department of Forest, Ecology and Environment,
Government of Karnataka,
Bengaluru

Subject: Diversion of 160.4 hectare of forest land in Sy No. 138 and 146 of Karlakatti village, Sy No. 128, 129 and 130 of Chakrageri village and Sy No. 3 and 4 of Kagihal village, Savadatti (Saundatti) Taluk, Belagavi District (Ghataprabha Division, Gokak) for construction of Standalone Pumped Storage Component of Saundatti Integrated Renewable Energy Project (IREP) in favour of the M/s Greenko Solar Energy Private Limited, Bengaluru, Karnataka (Online Proposal No. FP/KA/HYD/37723/2018)-reg.

Madam/Sir,

I am directed to refer to the Govt. of Karnataka's letter No. FEE 57 FLL 2021 (e) dated 1st Ph November, 2021 on the above mentioned subject, seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Section-2 (1) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980. After careful examination of the proposal by the Forest Advisory Committee constituted by the Central Government under Section-3 of the said Act, '*in-principle*' approval for the said diversion was granted vide this Ministry's letter of even number dated 12.07.2021 subject to fulfillment of certain conditions prescribed therein and change in the CA land vide letter dated 21.09.2023. The State Government has furnished compliance report in respect of the conditions stipulated in the in-principle approval and has requested the Central Government to grant final approval.

2. In this connection, I am directed to say that on the basis of the compliance report furnished by the Govt. of Karnataka vide letter No. FEE 57 FLL 2021 (e) dated 24.04.2024 along-with the PCCF (FC) letter's No. KFD/HoFF/A5-2(GFL)/66/2018-FC dated 05.04.2024 and letter dated 02.08.2024 '**Stage-II/final approval**' of the Central Government is hereby granted under Section-2 (1) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 for diversion of 160.4 hectare of forest land in Sy. No. 138 and 146 of Karlakatti village, Sy. No. 128, 129 and 130 of Chakrageri village and Sy. No. 3 and 4 of Kagihal village, Savadatti (Saundatti) Taluk, Belagavi District (Ghataprabha Division, Gokak) for construction of Standalone Pumped Storage Component of Saundatti Integrated Renewable Energy Project (IREP) in favour of the M/s. Greenko Solar Energy Private Limited, Bengaluru, Karnataka, subject to the following conditions:

1. Legal status of the forest land shall remain unchanged;
2. The State Government shall ensure that the forest land to be diverted will be handed over only after required non- forest land for the project is handed over by the user agency;
3. ***The State Government shall ensure that the User Agency shall comply with all the recommendations as per submitted EMPRI report;***
4. The Compensatory afforestation shall be taken up by the Forest Department over 167.05 ha of non-forest land which has already notified under Section 33 of the Karnataka Forest Act, 1963 by the GoK vide following notifications

| S. No. | Gazette Notification No | Area (in ha) |
|--------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. | FEE 16 FAF 2024 dated 26-02-2024 | 88.95 |
| 2. | FEE 15 FAF 2024 dated 26-02-2024 | 45.95 |
| 3. | FEE 24 FAF 2024 dated 26-02-2024 | 32.15 |

Total 167.05

at the cost already deposited by user agency. As far as possible, a mixture of local indigenous species shall be planted, and monoculture of any species may be avoided with provision for ten years on subsequent maintenance;

5. ***The State Government shall ensure that the following conditions suggested by the Department of Fisheries, Government of Karnataka be implemented at the cost of the User Agency if any:***
 - (i) to reduce the velocity of water discharge (to the extent possible) into Renuka Sagar reservoir during power generation at night as suggested in the EMPRI report. This will help to reduce adverse impact on fish and fishing operations.***
 - (ii) An 'Alert System' during water discharge for the safety of fishermen and their fishing equipment like fishing nets and coracles be provided.***
 - (iii) For extending support to livelihood of fishermen through implementation of fish production enhancement program in the reservoir is important. Annually, stocking of quality fish seeds of desirable fish species into Renuka Sagar reservoir by the department of fisheries, and local fishermen be supported.***
 - (iv) If required, the Department of Fisheries can prepare an annual action-plan for augmenting fish production in the reservoir to protect the livelihood of local fishermen. The same shall be implemented.***
 - (v) The free access / passage for fishermen to enter reservoir for fishing must be maintained.***
 - (vi) A baseline study and regular monitoring may be conducted to understand the impact, if any. The Department of Fisheries, Government of Karnataka may provide inputs for such a study.***

6. ***As per Rule 13 of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Rules 2023, the provided NFL for CA having growth beyond the specified crown density, therefore, the State Government shall ensure that implementation of the crop improvement at the cost of the UA deposited already;***
7. ***The State Government shall ensure for implementation of scheme regarding encouraging the existing natural regeneration of local species by way of singling and promoting the growth of promising shoots at the cost of the UA deposited already;***
8. ***The State Government shall ensure that the User Agency shall restrict the felling of trees to minimum numbers in the diverted forest land and trees shall be felled under strict supervision of the State Forest Department.***
9. ***The State Government shall ensure for implementation of scheme for planting of tall plants, watering and fencing to the plantation to protect the plantation in future from various biotic pressure including possible illegal encroachments at the cost of the UA deposited already. The maintenance of the plantation should be done accordingly as per the model approved by the State Government;***
10. ***The State Government shall ensure that the user agency shall carry out muck disposal at pre-designated sites in such a manner so as to avoid rolling down as per the muck disposal plan;***
11. ***The State Government shall ensure that the dumping area for a muck disposal shall be stabilized and reclaimed by planting suitable species by the user agency at the cost of project under the supervision of State Forest Department. Retaining walls and terracing shall be carried out to hold the dumping material in the place. Stabilization and reclamation of such dumping sites shall be completed before handing over the same to the State Forest Department in a time bound manner as per plan;***
12. The State Government shall ensure that the felling of trees shall be restricted to FRL-4 meter only and felling of trees shall be carried out by the State Forest Department. Number of trees to be removed shall be kept at barest minimum during the execution of the project;
13. The State Government shall ensure that the user agency shall undertake afforestation along with periphery of the reservoir;
14. The Catchment Area Treatment Plan (CAT) shall be implemented as per approved scheme;
15. The User Agency shall obtain Environmental Clearance as per the provisions of the Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986, if applicable;
16. The layout plan of the proposal shall not be changed without prior approval of Central Government;
17. 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;
18. Sufficient firewood, preferably the alternate fuel, shall be provided by the User Agency to the labourer after purchasing the same from the State Forest Department or the Forest Development Corporation or any other legal source of alternate fuel;
 19. The boundary of the diverted forest land shall be suitably demarcated on ground at the project cost, as per the directions of the concerned Divisional Forest Officer;
 20. No additional or new path will be constructed inside the forest area for transportation of construction materials for execution of the project work;
 21. The period of diversion under this approval shall be co-terminus with the period of lease to be granted in favour of the user agency or the project life, whichever is less;
 22. The forest land shall not be used for any purpose other than that specified in the project proposal;
 23. ***The user agency shall provide 3 solar powered bore wells for assisting the forestry related projects (as recommended by the State Govt);***
 24. The forest land proposed to be diverted shall under no circumstances be transferred to any other agencies, department or person without prior approval of Govt. of India;
 25. The User Agency shall pay the additional amount of NPV, if so determined, as per the final decision of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India;
 26. The user agency to take up protection & conservation measures for wildlife found in areas in consultation with State Forest department;
 27. The State Government shall ensure that appropriate measures to mitigate/minimize the adverse impact of the project on fish population in general and fish migration in particular. Such measures may include installation and operation of fish passes, fish ladder, fish lift, fish hatcheries etc.;
 28. Any other condition that the Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change may stipulate from time to time in the interest of conservation, protection and development of forests & wildlife shall be carried with by the State Government and user agency;
 29. The State Government and user agency shall ensure compliance to all conditions stipulated in the Stage-I approval letter dated 12.07.2021 for which undertakings have been obtained from the user agency and the user agency shall comply all the provisions of the all Acts, Rules, Regulations, Guidelines, complete compliance of FRA, 2006, Hon'ble Court Order (s) and NGT Order (s) pertaining to this project, if any, for the time being in force, as applicable to the project; and
 30. The violation of any of the conditions mentioned above shall amount to violation of Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 and action would be taken as per the para 1.16 of consolidated guidelines

and clarification issued under Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhinyam, 1980 and Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Rules, 2023 issued vide this Ministry F. No.5-2/2017-FC dated 29th November, 2023.

Yours faithfully,

(Dr. Dheeraj Mittal)

Assistant Inspector General of Forests

Copy to:-

1. PCCF (HoFF), Government of Karnataka, Bengaluru.
2. APCCF cum Nodal Officer (FCA), Government of Karnataka, Bengaluru.
3. DDGF (C), MoEF&CC's RO Bengaluru
4. User Agency
5. Monitoring Cell of FC Division, MoEF&CC, New Delhi.