



सं.5-ORA554/2023-BHU

दिनांक 03.08.2023

सेवा में,

अपर वन महानिदेशक (एफ.सी.),  
पर्यावरण, वन और जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय,  
इंदिरा पर्यावरण भवन,  
जोरबाग रोड, अली गंज,  
नई दिल्ली - 110 003

**बिषय :** Proposal for seeking prior approval of the Central Govt. under Section 2 (ii) of the FC Act, 1980 in favour of M/s Thriveni Earthmovers Private Ltd. for non-forestry use of 94.351 ha of forest land including 4.261 ha of Safety Zone (3.858 ha along the ML boundary and 0.403 ha along the PWD road) within the granted LoI for ML over 131.800 ha for Laserda Pacheri Manganese & Iron Ore Block in Keonjhar district of Odisha - reg.

**संदर्भ:** मंत्रालय पत्र सं. 8-02/2023-FC दिनांक 19.06.2023.

महोदय,

उपर्युक्त विषयक प्रसंगाधीन पत्र के आलोक में संबंधित प्रस्ताव का स्थल निरीक्षण अधोहस्ताक्षरी के द्वारा दिनांक **24.07.2023** को किया गया | स्थल निरीक्षण उपरांत स्थल निरीक्षण प्रतिवेदन इस पत्र के साथ संलग्न भेजा जा रहा है |

अनु : यथोक्त।

भवदीय,  
**ए.टी. मिश्रा**  
(ए. टी. मिश्रा)  
उप वन महानिदेशक (के)

**SITE INSPECTION REPORT IN RESPECT OF DIVERSION 94.351 HA OF FOREST LAND INCLUDING 4.261 HA OF FOREST LAND EARMARKED FOR SAFETY ZONE (3.858 HA ALONG THE ML BOUNDARY AND 0.403 HA ALONG THE PWD ROAD) WITHIN THE GRANTED LOI FOR MINING LEASE OVER 131.800 HA IN LASERDA PACHERI MANGANESE & IRON ORE BLOCK OF M/S THRIVENI EARTH MOVERS PRIVATE LIMITED UNDER SECTION 2 (II) OF FOREST (CONSEVATION) ACT, 1980.**

The site inspection of the above project was carried out by the undersigned on 24.07.2023 along with RCCF, Rourkela, DFO, Keonjhar and representatives from the user agency.

**1. Legal status of the forest land proposed for diversion:**

As reported by State Govt., legal status of the forest land is as below:

Sl. No.	Name of village	Forest area (in Ha)		
		Revenue Forest	Sabik Forest	Total
1.	Dhanurjaypur	23.683	3.846	27.529
2.	Kanrda	8.011	9.010	17.021
3.	Lasarda	21.773	28.028	49.801
<b>Total</b>		<b>53.467</b>	<b>40.884</b>	<b>94.351</b>

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

The item wise break up of forest and non-forest land as proposed by the State Govt. for this project is as below:

Sl. No.	Purpose of Utilization	Forest land (in Ha)	Non-forest land (in Ha)	Total (in Ha)
1.	Mining along with Mines road	64.368	12.580	76.948
2.	Waste dump with environmental safe guard like Retaining wall, Garland Drain and Settling pond	11.612	7.060	18.672
3.	Screening & Crushing plant	1.066	1.204	2.270
4.	Sorting & sizing of Mn Ore	8.774	10.968	19.742
5.	Mineral stacking yard	1.684	0.076	1.760
6.	Office, Site service & Admin. Building, Camp, Workshop	0.612	1.339	1.951
7.	Parking Area	0.970	0.971	1.941
8.	Internal road for transporting	0.549	1.366	1.915
9.	Road for In & Out in SZ along the ML boundary	0.039	0.007	0.046
10.	Road for In & Out in SZ along the PWD road	0.162	0	0.162
11.	Road for In & Out in SZ along the river	0.254	0.025	0.279
<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>90.090</b>	<b>35.596</b>	<b>125.686</b>
12.	Safety zone along the lease boundary	3.858	1.690	5.548
13.	Safety zone along the PWD road	0.403	0.163	0.566
<b>Sub-Total</b>		<b>4.261</b>	<b>1.853</b>	<b>6.114</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>94.351</b>	<b>37.449</b>	<b>131.800</b>

As per Mining Plan, total Mine out area at the conceptual stage will be 75.803 Ha. As per the proposal submitted by the State Govt. 76.948 Ha is proposed for Mining including Mines road. During site inspection the representative of user agency said that the area for road is included in 76.948 Ha. For Waste Dump the State Govt. has proposed 11.612 Ha of forest land and for Sorting and sizing of

manganese ore 8.774 Ha of forest land which is very high, the user agency present during inspection said that for manganese ore mine, the waste material is of ratio 1 : 10, so to accommodate the waste material and sorting and sizing of manganese ore, forest land has been proposed as other non-forest land not available in the lease area.

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

As reported by the State Govt. 0.612 Ha of forest land has been proposed for Office, Site service & Administrative Building, Camp & Workshop.

**4. Total cost of the project at present rates:**

As reported by the State Govt., the estimated cost of the project is reported to be Rs.9600 Lakhs.

**5. Wildlife:**

As reported by DFO, Keonjhar movement of wild elephants is often noticed and movement of wild elephant in the adjoining forests cannot be ruled out. The wildlife present in and around the applied forest area are Sambar, Spotted deer, Barking deer, Jackal, Hyena, Elephant, Sloth bear, Leopard, Mongoose, Peacock, Cuckoo, Grey Jungle Fowl, Monitor, Lizards, Chamelion etc.

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

The DFO, Keonjhar Forest Division has reported that the applied area does not form part of any National Park/ Wildlife Sanctuary/ Biosphere Reserve/ Tiger Reserve/ Elephant Corridor. There is no rare/ endangered/ unique species of flora and fauna in the forest area proposed for diversion. It was also reported that the proposed site for the project does not come under eco-sensitive zone of any protected area.

As elephant movement often noticed this area, Wildlife Conservation Plan with special emphasis to mitigate the adverse impact on elephant movement as well as conservation and protection of other wildlife found in and around the proposed area is required.

**6. Vegetation:**

The canopy density of the forest growth is reported to be 0.3 and Eco-value Class-I. The prevailing vegetation in the forest land located within the granted LoI block includes Sal and its associates like *Lagerstroemia perviflora*, *Anogeissus latifolia*, *Terminalia belerica*, *Syzygium cumini*, *Terminalia alata*, *Mangifera indica*, *Schleichera oleosa*, *Adina cordifolia*, *Pterocarpus marsupium*, *Bombax ceiba*, *Bridelia retusa*, *Madhuca indica*. The middle story is represented by *Syzygium cumini*, *Ougeinia ougenensis*, *Careya arborea*, *Treama orientalis*, *Emblie officinalis*, *Cassia fistula* etc. The shrubs and undergrowth are characterized by *Indigofera pulchella*, *Ardisia solenacea*, *Flemingia chhappar*, *Helicteres ixora* and *Clerodendron viscosum* etc.

**(a) Total number of trees to be felled.**

There are 1698 nos. of sound, 998 nos. of unsound trees and 4399 nos. of poles below 30 cm girth enumerated in 23 nos. sample plot (each 1 ha) forest area located within the granted LoI area proposed for Mining and ancillaries activities.

### **Effect of removal of trees on the general ecosystem in the area:**

As there are large numbers of trees to be felled, it will affect the general ecosystem of the area. Trees should be felled in a phased manner when absolutely essential to remove to minimize the adverse impact on the eco-system.

### **(b) Important species:**

As reported by the State Govt., the tree species available in the applied area is Sal (*Shorea robusta*), Piasal (*Pterocarpus marsupium*), Kuruma (*Adina cordifolia*), Ghambhari (*Gmelina arborea*), Asana (*Terminalia tomentosa*), Amba (*Mangifera indica*), Dhaura (*Anogeissus latifolia*), Jamu (*Syzigium cumini*), Kendu (*Diasporus melanoxylon*), Kali Kendu (*Diospyros montana*), Kasi (*Bridelia retusa*), Panasa (*Artocarpus integrifolia*), etc.

## **7. Background note on the proposal:**

State Govt. of Odisha, Steel & Mines Department issued the Letter of Intent (LoI) vide letter No.IV(MISC)SM-06/2017/848/SM dated 27.01.2017 under Rule 18(1) of Mineral Auction Rules, 2015 for grant of Composite License (CL) in favour of M/s Thriveni Earth Movers Pvt. Ltd. (TEMPL). After complying with the stipulated conditions of LoI, Govt. of Odisha, Steel & Mines Department declared M/s Thriveni Earth Movers Pvt. Ltd. as the Successful Bidder and granted the Composite License over 256.304 Ha for Manganese vide No.IV(B)SM-100/2007-433/SM dated 19.01.2019 and the prospecting license deed of the composite license in respect of Laserda Pacheri Manganese Block over 256.304 Ha in Keonjhar district was executed and registered on 24.01.2019 for 2 years. During prospecting, new minerals (i.e. iron ore) was discovered and it was intimated to Govt. under Rule 11 (2) of Minerals (Other than Atomic and Hydro Carbons Energy Minerals) Concession Rules. 2016. On due completion of exploration, Mining Lease application over 131.889 Ha was submitted and Govt. of Odisha has awarded the Letter of Intent for grant of mining lease vide No.7731-IV(B)SM-100/2017/SM dated 21.09.2021 in favour of M/s Thriveni Earth Movers Pvt. Ltd. for Manganese & Iron ore over an area of 131.889 Ha situated in Dhanrajapaur-40, Kanrda-38 & Laserda village under Barbil Tahasil of Keonjhar District, Odisha. Subsequently, after conduct of DGPS survey ORSAC, the area now comes to 131.800 ha which has been intimated by Director of Mines vide letter No.MXIII (b)80/2015/8031/DM dated 22.10.2021. As per condition No.4 (c) of LoI for grant of Mining Lease the signing of Mine Development and Production Agreement only be considered after obtaining all consent, approvals, permits, no-objections and the like as may be required under applicable laws for commencement of mining operations. As per the condition No.6 (1), the validity of the intent is for a period of 3 years from the date of its issuance, within which time all the condition must be fulfilled and the mining lease deed must executed between M/s Thriveni Earth Movers Pvt. Ltd. and the Govt. of Odisha.

## **8. Compensatory afforestation:**

### **(a) Whether land for compensatory afforestation is suitable from plantation and management point of view or not:**

The DFO, Keonjhar Forest Division has reported that CA area has been proposed in 90.493 Ha (94.351 Ha – 3.858 Ha for Safety Zone) non-forest land equal extent to the forest land proposed for diversion, the non-forest Govt. land over 91.00 Ha. in village Uperbirikala under BJP Range of Banspal Tahasil has been allotted by the Collector,

Keonjhar vide letter No.2366/Rev dated 07.12.2021 for raising compensatory afforestation.

The CA site was inspected along with the DFO, Keonjhar Division. The CA site is of one patch of non-forest land with very dense vegetation and degraded blanks. Some of the photographs of the proposed CA land is as below:



**Photographs of proposed CA Site**

During inspection the DFO, Keonjhar said that out of 91.00 ha of non-forest land, AR plantation over 39 Ha @ 1000 seedlings have been proposed and balance 52 Ha will be treated as ANR without gap plantation model for which provision for SMC measures has been kept over 91 Ha.

In order accommodate balance 52,000 seedlings (91,000 – 39,000), the DFO, Keonjhar has identified 104 Ha of degraded forest land in Jyotipur RF under Champua Range of Keonjhar Forest Division. The DFO, Keonjhar has proposed ANR Plantation @ 500 seedlings over 104 Ha of degraded forest land. The identified non-forest CA area is of single patch of 91.00 Ha, so there will be no problem from management point of view.

**(b) Whether land for compensatory afforestation is free from encroachment/other encumbrances:**

The Tahasildar, Banspal has certified that non-forest C.A. land is free from encroachment and encumbrances and not covered under DLC report.

**(c) Whether land for compensatory afforestation is important from Religious/Archaeological point of view:**

It has been reported that the land for CA is not important from Religious/Archaeological point of view.

**(d) Land identified for raising compensatory afforestation is in how many patches, whether patches are compact or not:**

The non-forest land identified in Uperbirikala village under Banspal Tahasil of Keonjhar under Keonjhar Forest Division for raising compensatory afforestation is comprising 91.00 Ha in one patch.

**(e) Map with details:**

The DGPS maps and SoI Toposheets (F45N6) (73G/9 & 73G/13) indicating location of identified non-forest land and degraded forest land for C.A. and additional C.A. have been submitted by the State Govt.

**(f) Total financial outlay:**

The C.A. Scheme over 91.00 of non-forest land has been technically approved by PCCF (Nodal), Odisha with a financial outlay of Rs.2,78,03,600/-. Similarly, the Addl. C.A. Scheme over 104 Ha of degraded forest land has been technically approved by PCCF (Nodal), Odisha for a financial outlay of Rs.3,13,62,800/-

**9. Whether proposal involves violation of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 or not. If yes, a detailed report on violation including action taken against the concerned officials:**

The DFO, Keonjhar has reported that this is a fresh lease granted through e-auction to M/s Thriveni Earth Movers Pvt. Ltd. by the Department of Steel & Mines, Govt. of Odisha vide No.IV (B)SM-100/2007-433/SM dated 19.01.2019 as a Composite License. LoI holder has carried out exploration through putting boreholes and 1 trial pits of size 17m x 10m for which LoI holders had obtained Stage-II forest clearance vide F. No.8-62/2017-FC dated 08.10.2018 of MoEF&CC, Govt. of India. However, 3.666 Ha (Forest 3.312 Ha and Non-forest 0.354 Ha) of land was disturbed by old pits over 2.491 Ha and 1.175 Ha for road prior to grant of Composite License. The LoI holder has not violated under FC Act, 1980.

Further, the DFO, Keonjhar has reported that there are 48 existing small illegal mining pits covering 2.5 Ha land at least more than 10 years old. The DFO, Keonjhar present during inspection said that the local villagers generally illegally collect from these pits.

**10. Whether proposal involves rehabilitation of displaced persons. If yes, whether rehabilitation plan has been prepared by the State Government or not:**

The State Govt. has reported that the project involves displacement of 25 families out of which 23 Scheduled Tribes and 2 other category families. The user agency has submitted an undertaking that the approved R&R plan will be submitted prior to final approval of the diversion proposal over 94.351 Ha within 131.800 Ha of mining lease area. The affected families will be displaced as per the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency of Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 and the Odisha Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency of Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2016.

**11. Reclamation plan:**

The State Govt. has reported that the concurrent reclamation plan and Scheme has been submitted. The reclamation and rehabilitation will be carried out as per the approved progressive mine closure/final mine closure plan approved by the Indian Bureau of Mines.

**12. Details on catchment and command area under the project:**

During inspection it is observed that Karo river is crossing between two blocks of the Mining lease. The mining project will affect the catchment of this Karo river. So there is a need for soil and moisture conservation measures in the rest catchment of this river and the forest lands in and around the proposed site. Safety zone with plantation of at least 50 meter width may be maintained along the lease boundary close to river. The user agency said that they will construct separate bridge over the river to connect the two patches of mining lease. The DFO, has reported that one seasonal nala drains water to Karo river in Pacheri block. The user agency said that this seasonal nala will be part of mining block. Efforts should be made to ensure that no discharge leads to the Karo river from the mining lease area.

**13. Cost benefit ratio:**

As reported, the total benefit of the proposal comes to Rs.126850 Lakhs. The total loss on forests including environmental loss comes to 3244.4589 Lakhs. Hence, the Cost Benefit Ratio is coming to 1 : 39.09.

**14. Recommendations of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests/State Government:**

The forest area proposed for diversion has been duly recommended by PCCF.

**15. Utility of the project:**

As reported by State Govt., the project will generate permanent employment of 335 persons and temporary employment of 35 persons.

**Numbers of Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribes to be benefited by the project:**

Not reported.

**16. (a) Whether land being diverted has any socio-cultural/ religious value:**

Not reported.

**(b) Whether any sacred grove or very old growth trees/forests exist in the areas proposed for diversion:**

The DFO, Keonjhar has reported plenty of old Bara trees exists inside the lease area not to be felled as keystone species.

**(c) Whether the land under diversion forms part of any unique eco-system:**

No such report available.

**17. Situation with respect to any Protected Area:**

The DFO, Bonai has reported that the proposed site falls in Elephant Habitat Zone-2 as per ORSAC, Bhubaneswar. The proposed site about 113.00 Km away from the nearest Similipal Tiger Reserve and Karo-Karampada Elephant Corridor is situated about 2.31 Km from the nearest boundary of applied area.

**18. Any other information relating to the project:**

The proposed site was visited on 24.07.2023 along with RCCF, Rourkela and DFO, Keonjhar. Some of the photographs of the proposed site for diversion is as below:



**Photographs of proposed site for diversion**

**19. Recommendations of Dy. Director General of Forests (Central) along with detailed reasons:**

1. The Govt. of Odisha in Steel & Mines Department vide their Order No.7731-IV (B)SM-100/2017/SM dated awarded the Letter of Intent for grant of mining lease in favour of M/s Thriveni Earth Movers Pvt. Ltd. for Manganese & Iron or over an area of 131.889 ha. Subsequently, after conduct of DGPS survey by ORSAC, the area now comes to 131.800 ha as intimated by Director of Mines vide letter No.MXIII (b)80/2015/8031/DM dated 22.10.2021.



2. The Mining Plan has been approved by the Indian Bureau of Mines vide their letter No.MP/A/14-ORI/BHU/2021-22 dated 18.11.2021 for a period of 5 years from the date successive year of lease deed execution. The mining plan has been approved for 131.800 ha.
3. Total land involved in this mining lease is 131.800 Ha comprising of 94.351 Ha of forest land 37.449 Ha of non-forest land. The proposed 94.351 Ha of forest land comprises of 53.467 Ha of Revenue Forest land and 40.351 Ha of Sabik Forest land.
4. The density of vegetation is reported to be 0.3 and Eco-value Class-I. The number of trees to be felled is large. To minimize the adverse ecological impact, trees should be felled in a phased manner and when become absolutely necessary. The user agency shall explore the possibility of successful transplantation of maximum number of trees identified to be felled under strict supervision of the State Forest Department.
5. A good number of old Baniyan trees exists inside the lease area. These trees should be felled only when it is absolutely necessary to be felled. Efforts should be made to conserve the Baniyan trees.
6. The proposed site does not come under any Protected Area or within the Eco-Sensitive Zone. As there is occasional movement of elephant in this area, Wildlife Conservation Plan with special emphasis to mitigate the adverse impact on elephant movement as well as conservation and protection of other wildlife found in and around the proposed area is required. Besides, the user agency shall pay towards cost of Regional Wildlife Management for entire mining lease as per approved norm of State Govt.
7. As reported by the DFO, Keonjhar there are 48 existing small illegal mining pits covering 2.5 Ha land at least more than 10 years old. During site visit, mining pits were covered with vegetation. This illegal mining activities are not attributed to the user agency.
8. The Karo river is crossing between two blocks of the Mining lease. The mining project will affect the catchment of this Karo river. So there is a need for soil and moisture conservation measures in the rest catchment of this river and the forest lands in and around the proposed site. Safety zone with plantation of at least 50 meter width may be maintained along the lease boundary close to river. The user agency will construct bridge over the Karo river to connect the two patches of the mining lease. No excavated materials should be rolled down into the Karo river.
9. The project involves displacement of 25 families out of which 23 Scheduled Tribes and 2 other category families. Accordingly, the user agency shall submit duly approved R&R plan prior to final approval.
10. This diversion proposal is for mining of Manganese and Iron ore, which is site specific. The user agency has identified 91.00 Ha of non-forest land for raising Compensatory Afforestation which is in a single patch.

In view of the above, the proposal may be considered under provisions of FC Act, 1980 subject to compliance of other general conditions and observation made during site inspection.



(A.T. MISHRA)

**DY. DIRECTOR GENERAL OF FORESTS (C)**