



सं.5-ORA567/2023-BHU

दिनांक 30.08.2023

सेवा में,

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

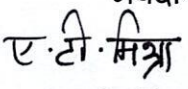
विषय : Proposal for seeking prior approval of the Central Govt. under Section 2 (ii) of the FC Act, 1980 in favour of M/s Raga Tradecon Pvt. Ltd. for non-forestry use of 66.242 (including 2.09 ha safety zone) ha of forest land for mining of iron ore within Netrabandha Pahar (West) Iron Ore Block in villages Baldihi and Sanua under Bonai Forest Division of Sundargarh District - reg.

संदर्भ: मंत्रालय पत्र सं. 8-14/2023-FC दिनांक 27.07.2023.

महोदय,

उपर्युक्त विषयक प्रसंगाधीन पत्र के आलोक में संबंधित प्रस्ताव का स्थल निरीक्षण अधोहस्ताक्षरी के द्वारा दिनांक 18.08.2023 को किया गया | स्थल निरीक्षण उपरांत स्थल निरीक्षण प्रतिवेदन इस पत्र के साथ संलग्न भेजा जा रहा है |

अनु : यथोक्त |

भवदीय,

(ए. टी. मिश्रा)
उप वन महानिदेशक (के)

SITE INSPECTION REPORT OF PROPOSAL SEEKING APPROVAL UNDER SECTION-2 (II) OF FOREST CONSERVATION ACT, 1980 FOR DIVERSION OF 66.242 HA (INCLUDING 2.09 HA OF SAFETY ZONE) IN RESPECT OF NETRABANDHA PAHAR (WEST) IRON ORE BLOCK IN VILLAGE BALDIHI AND SANUA UNDER BONAI FOREST DIVISION OF SUNDARGARH DISTRICT BY M/S RAGA TRADECON PVT. LTD.

The site inspection of the above project was carried out by the undersigned on 18.08.2023 along with DFO, Bonai other officials from Forest Department and representative of the user agency.

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

The legal status of forest land is as follows:

PRF	49.411 ha
Revenue Forest	8.032 ha
DLC	8.799 ha
Total	66.242 ha

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

Sl. No.	Purpose of Utilization	Total Forest land (in Ha)	Non-forest land (in Ha)	Grand Total (in Ha)
1.	Mining including mines road and mineral processing unit	41.677	2.143	43.820
2.	Waste dump with safeguard measure like retaining wall, garland drain and settling pond, check dam etc.	7.403	0	7.403
3.	Mineral stacking yard	10.761	0.128	10.889
4.	Top Soil	0.272	0	0.272
5.	Road	2.724	0.247	2.971
6.	Entry and exist within safety zone area	0	0.010	0.010
7.	Infrastructure (Office, Magazine, workshop, fuel station, parking plaza & Temp. Top soil yard etc.)	0	1.652	1.652
8.	Green Belt/Grass Turfing	1.315	2.143	3.458
9.	Undisturbed land	0	0.903	0.903
Sub-Total		64.152	7.226	71.378
10.	Safety Zone	2.090	0.902	2.992
Grand Total		66.242	8.128	74.370

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

Yes, 1.652 ha of non-forest land is proposed for Infrastructure (Office, Magazine, workshop, fuel station, parking plaza & Temp. Top soil yard etc)

4. Total cost of the project at present rates:

The total cost of the project is reported to be Rs.100 Crores.

5. **Wildlife:**

As reported by the DFO, Bonai Forest Division, fauna such as Elephant (*Elephas maximus*), Sloth Bear (*Melursus ursinus*), Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa*), Barking Deer (*Muntiacus muntjak*), Mongoose (*Herpestes edwardsi*), Porcupine (*Hystrix indica*), Jackal (*Canis aureus*), Hanuman Langur (*Presbytes entellus*), Hyaena (*Hyaena hyaena*), etc. and different types of snakes and birds are noticed in the area. The distance of project site from the nearest Protected Area (Similipal Wildlife Sanctuary) is 81.65 Km. The project is 13.93 Kms away from the nearest Elephant Corridor (Karo-Karampada).

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

The DFO, Bonai Forest Division has reported that the applied area is not involved with any eco-sensitive zone/ National Park/Sanctuary.

6. **Vegetation:**

The density of vegetation is reported to be 0.5 (Eco Value Class-I).

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

As per the report of DFO, Bonai total 22,671 trees (including 715 in the safety zone area) have been enumerated in the 66.242 ha area.

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*), Sidha (*Lagerstroemia parviflora*), Saguan (*Tectona grandis*), Shisu (*Dalbergia latifolia*), Amla (*Emblica officinalis*), Kusum (*Schleichera oleosa*), Bara (*Ficus bengalensis*), Harida (*Terminalia chebula*), Bahada (*Terminalia belerica*), Char (*Buchanania lanjan*), Jamu (*Syzygium cumini*), Asana (*Terminalia tomentosa*), Kendu (*Diasporus melanoxylon*), Mahul (*Madhuca indica*), Kumbhi (*Careya arborea*) Mango (*Mangifera indica*), etc.

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

As reported, M/s Raga Tradecon Private Limited has been incorporated under company Act 1956 vide certificate of Incorporation No.21-73114 on 24.07.1995 with corporate identity number of the company U51420MH 1995PTC62317. The registered office is situated at state of Maharashtra (Mumbai), House No-503, 5th floor, Greenland Appts, BLDG No.3, JB Nagar, Andheri East, Mumbai-400059, Maharashtra to carry on all or any of the business as manufacturers, buyers, sellers, suppliers, traders, exporters, minerals, metals etc. The company does not have any other mines in the State of Odisha or any other part of India.

The Govt. of Odisha., Steel & Mines Department pursuant to the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 and the Mineral (Auction) Rules, 2015 as amended from time to time (the Auction Rule) issued the notice inviting tender dated 07.07.2021 for commencement of the auction process for grant the mining Lease for Netrabandha Pahar (West) Iron Ore Block located in Koira Tahasil of Sundargarh District of Odisha. The e-auction process was conducted in accordance with the tender document and the mineral auction Rules, 2015 for the said Mineral Block and M/s Raga Tradecon

Pvt. Ltd. was declared as the preferred Bidder under Rule 9(9) (iii) or Rule 10 (A) of Auction Rules having quoted a final price offer of 139.50%. The Director of Mines, Steel & Mines Department, Govt. of Odisha declared M/s Raga Tradecon Pvt. Ltd. as preferred bidders for grant of mining lease of Netrabandha Pahar (West) Iron ore block.

Further, M/s Raga Tradecon Pvt. Ltd has made payment of Rs.5,84,05,424/- (Rupees Five Crore Eighty-four Lakhs Five Thousand Four Hundred Twenty-four) only on dated 22.10.2021 towards the first installment being twenty percent of the upfront money. Accordingly, the Government of Odisha, Steel & Mines Department has issued Letter of Intent (LoI) vide letter No. 8722/IV(B)SM-53/2021/SM, Bhubaneswar, dated 28.10.2021 in favour of M/s Raga Tradecon Pvt. Ltd. for grant of Mining Lease for Netrabandha Pahar (West) Iron Ore Block over an area of 74.370 ha in south of Baldihi village, Koira Tahasil of Sundargarh district of Odisha for a period of 50 years.

As per the LoI condition, the letter of intent is valid subject to the compliance of provision of the Act and the Rules made there under as amended from time to time and M/s Raga Tradecon Pvt. Ltd shall be designated as the **Successful Bidder** and subsequently will be granted the mining lease only upon satisfactory completion of all the requirements under the Act and Rules made there under. This Letter of Intent is valid for a period of 3 (Three) years from the date of its issuance, within which time all the above condition must be fulfilled and the mining lease deed must be executed. The valid period shall be extended for maximum period of 2 years and the total period for which the Letter of Intent would remained valid upto 5 (Five) years from the date of issuance.

Accordingly, M/s Raga Tradecon Pvt. Ltd. has submitted the proposal to obtain diversion of 66.242 ha of forest land including safety zone area of 2.090 ha for Iron ore mining under Section-2 (ii) of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for grant of forest land on lease over 66.242 ha within Netrabandha Pahar (West) Iron Ore Block of total 74.370 ha located in village Baldihi & Sanua in Koira Tahasil under Bonai Forest Division of Sundargarh District, Odisha.

8. Compensatory afforestation:

The DFO, Bonai Forest Division has reported that CA area has been identified over 64.50 ha of non-forest Govt. land in village Mahupada under Koira Tahasil of Rourkela Forest Division.

The C.A. site was inspected along with RCCF, Rourkela and DFO, Rourkela Forest Division. The identified C.A. land is in two patches and are close to Silkuta RF of Rourkela Forest Division.

The DFO, Rourkela has reported that CA Scheme has been proposed over 64.50 ha of non-forest land for ANR plantation @ 500 plants/ha over 32.50 ha and @ 200 plants/ha over 32 ha. Thus total 22,650 plants will be accommodated over 64.50 ha of non-forest land. To accommodate the balance 41502 plants, the DFO, Bonai has identified 73.462 ha of degraded forest land in Mahulpada RF under Bonai Forest Division.

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

The DFO, Rourkela Forest Division has reported that CA area has been proposed in 64.50 ha of non-forest land identified in Mahupada village under Koira Tahasil of Sundargarh District under Rourkela Forest Division. The identified land is having moderately dense vegetation. During inspection the DFO, Rourkela said that as the identified CA area is large in size i.e. 64.50 ha and also close to Silkuta RF, so there will be no problem from management point of view. Depending on the availability of blank patches ANR has been proposed and rest seedlings will be planted in Mahulpada RF.

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

The Tahasildar, Koira 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 Mahupada village under Koira Tahasil of Sundargarh District under Rourkela Forest Division for raising compensatory afforestation is comprising 64.50 ha in one patch.

(e) Map with details:

The DGPS map and SoI Toposheet (**F45H4**) indicating location of identified non-forest land for C.A. has been submitted by the State Govt.

(f) Total financial outlay:

The DFO, Bonai has reported that 64.50 ha of non-forest land has been identified for C.A. The DFO, Rourkela has submitted of C.A. Scheme. The PCCF & Nodal Officer (FCA), Odisha has technically approved the C.A. Scheme for Rs.2,22,54,100/-.

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:

As reported by the DFO, Bonai Forest Division, no violation has been reported under FC, Act 1980. During site inspection also, no violation was observed.

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

As per report of the DFO, Bonai Forest Division, the project does not involve displacement of any human habitation. Hence, resettlement and rehabilitation plan is not required.

11. Reclamation plan:

The Mining Plan of Netrabandha Pahar (West) Iron Ore Block along with Progressive Mine Closure Plan over an area of 74.370 ha has been approved by the Indian Bureau of Mines vide their Letter No. MPIA/24-ORI/BHU/2021-22 dated 07.02.2022 and has been submitted.

Details of financial allocation:

Not reported.

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

Not applicable.

Catchment area treatment plan to prevent siltation of reservoir:

Not applicable.

13. Cost benefit ratio:

As reported, the total estimated benefit of the project comes to as Rs.76860 Lakhs and the loss on forest including environmental loss comes to Rs.2438.815 Lakhs. Hence, The C-B Ratio is 1 : 32.00.

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

Recommended by PCCF, Odisha/State Government.

15. Utility of the project:

This proposal will generate 188 nos. of persons with different skills out of which 70 persons direct/regular and 118 persons indirect.

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:

As reported, there is no Archeological/Heritage/Defence establishment or any other monuments located in the area.

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

Not reported.

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

The DFO, Bonai Forest Division has reported that there is no Archeological/Heritage/Defence establishment or any other important monuments located in the area.

17. Situation with respect to any Protected Area:

The nearest Elephant Corridor is Karo-Karampada, which is at a distance of 13.93 Kms and the nearest PA, Similipal Wildlife sanctuary is at a distance of 81.65 Kms approximately.

18. Any other information relating to the project:

Photographs of proposed site for diversion is attached below :



Photographs of proposed CA Site is attached below:



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

- a) The Government of Odisha, Steel & Mines Department has issued Letter of Intent (LoI) vide letter No. 8722/IV(B)SM-53/2021/SM, Bhubaneswar, dated 28.10.2021 in favour of M/s Raga Tradecon Pvt. Ltd. for grant of Mining Lease for Netrabandha Pahar (West) Iron Ore Block over an area of 74.370 ha in south of Baldihi village, Koira Tahasil of Sundargarh district of Odisha for a period of 50 years.
- b) The Mining Plan of Netrabandha Pahar (West) Iron Ore Block along with Progressive Mine Closure Plan over an area of 74.370 ha has been approved by the Indian Bureau of Mines vide their Letter No. MPIA/24-ORI/BHU/2021-22 dated 07.02.2022.

- c) The applied area is not involved with any National Park/Wildlife Sanctuary and Eco Sensitive Zone. However, as reported, Karo-Karampada Elephant corridor is about 13.31 Km from the project.
- d) The project does not involve displacement of any human habitation.
- e) The density of vegetation has been reported to be 0.5 with Eco Value Class-I. Total 22,671 numbers of trees in the forest land has been enumerated for this project. Removal of trees has impact on the general ecosystem. So, trees should be felled only when it is absolutely necessary and in a phased manner under the supervision of State Forest Department.

As per DSS analysis the proposed forest land is not Inviolate. The canopy density is mostly moderately dense.


- f) Non-forest land over 64.50 ha has been identified for compensatory afforestation which is close to Silkuta RF.
- g) As per site inspection report of DFO, Bonai Division there is movement of elephant in the proposed area. The nearest elephant corridor is about 13.93 Km from the proposed area.

From perusal of the man-animal conflict position of Bonai Division and nearest Keonjhar Division it is found that there are substantial number of death of elephant as well as human occurred in the last five years. So there is a need to prepare a Comprehensive Wildlife Management Plan addressing the safe movement of elephant (elephant being a long range animal). The second important thing is though the State Govt. has provision for death due to man-animal conflict, there should be provision for some additional compensation to the next of the victim in the wildlife management plan also which should be proportionately contributed by the mining companies within the jurisdiction of Sundargarh and Keonjhar District.

State Govt. has recommended for Site Specific as well as Regional Wildlife Management Plan. The Regional Wildlife Management Plan should be prepared comprising Keonjhar, Bonai, Sundargarh, Rourkela and Jharsuguda Division. The contribution for the same should be shared by the mining companies located in all these Division.

- h) Carrying Capacity Study for Environmentally Sustainable Iron and Manganese Ore mining activity in Keonjhar, Sundargarh and Mayurbhanj districts of Odisha State by NEERI has reported that in view of limited iron ore mining activity in Mayurbhanj and Jajpur district, the major iron producing areas that need special attention are Joda-Barbil (Keonjhar District) and Koira section (Sundargarh district) and have suggested yearly increase of additional 20 MT production by further expansion or new mines from year 2016-17 to 2020-21 in the Joda-Koira section (Keonjhar and Sundargarh district).
- i) MoEF&CC, New Delhi vide letter No.8-12/2023-FC dated 21.08.2023 has approved the proposal under Section 2 (iii) of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

In view of the above, mining being a site specific activity, the proposal is recommended for consideration under Section 2 (ii) of FC Act, 1980 subject to compliance of general conditions and observation made in the site inspection.


30/8/23
(A. T. Mishra)

Dy. Director General of Forests (Central)