

I/6054/2021

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

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,
Aliganj, Jor Bag Road,
New Delhi - 110003.

Dated: 5th October, 2021

To

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

Sub: Proposal for non-forestry use of 349.709 ha forest land in favour of M/s Mahanadi Coalfields Limited for Siarmal Opencast Coal Mining Project in Sundergarh District (Odisha) – reg.

Sir,

I am directed to refer to Government of Odisha's letter ni. No. FE-DIV-FLD-0118-2021-16201/ FE&CC dated 13.09.2021 on the above subject seeking prior approval of Central Government under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and to inform that examination of said proposal in the Ministry revealed following:

- i. DSS analysis of the degraded forest land proposed for CA land revealed that out of total area of 712.477 ha proposed for CA, an area of 128 falls under MDF category, 556 under OF category, 1 ha under water body and 27 ha as non-wooded area. Suitability of 128 ha of degraded forest land revealed as MDF needs to be re-visited by the State.
- ii. Important wildlife species reported in the area include hyena, porcupines, black bear, spotted deer, wild boar, barking deer, Jackal mongoose, etc. The State Government may therefore comment on the requirement of mitigating measures, if any, required to be undertaken for the protection and conservation of these species.
- iii. As per justification, submitted online, it is indicated that project under extant coal block also covers other areas viz. Siarmal Extension and Banapatra. State Government, may therefore, inform the status of additional forest land, if any, involved in these additional areas and status of approval, if any obtained or being obtained may also be intimated.
- iv. Cost benefits analysis submitted along with the proposal appears to be a economical analysis carried out for the project. Cost benefits Analysis, taking into consideration, the ecological parameters, as envisaged in the guidelines dated 29.01.2018 have not been estimated. Therefore, Cost benefits analysis in accordance with the relevant guidelines taking into account all specified parameters needs to be estimated and submitted by the State.
- v. With regards to drainage system of the area, it is reported that Basundhara river, Telendra/ Chaturdhara & Chattajor nullah flows around periphery of block. Measure proposed to be undertaken by the User Agency to mitigate the impact of mining on the local drainage system may be intimated by the State.
- vi. In addition to land use proposed in the Mining Plan, an area of 823 ha has also been proposed to be acquired outside the lease/project area for infrastructure and dumping facilities. Detail of forest land, if any involved in the area proposed to be acquired outside the lease may be intimated by the State.

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- vii. Detail of coal evacuation plan from the mine to nearest railway siding is not available in the proposal. The same needs to be intimated by the State.
- viii. As per the relevant guidelines issued by the MoEF&CC, compliance of Forest Rights Act, 2006 is to be ensured by the Ministry at the time of Stage-II approval, however, an undertaking informing the initiation of process has to be submitted along with the proposal. Status of initiation of process of settlement of rights under the Forest Right Act, 2006 may be intimated by the State.

Yours faithfully,
sd/-
(Charan Jeet Singh)
Scientist 'D'

Copy to:-

1. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
2. Regional Officer (Central), Integrated Regional Office of the MoEF&CC at Bhubaneswar with a request **to inspect the area and submit an inspection report to the Ministry for further needful**
3. Nodal Officer (FCA), Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
4. Monitoring Cell of FC Divisions, MoEF&CC, New Delhi.
5. Guard file.