

No. RK/FCA/ 8687
Forest Department, Himachal Pradesh

Dated J/Nagar, the/ 3-3-2026

From: DFO Joginder Nagar

To: CF Mandi

Subject:- Proposal for seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Section 2 (1) (ii) of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 in favors of M/s Neelkant Mining for non-Forestry use of 1.5452 ha Unclassed Forest for extraction of Sand , Stone and Bajri at Sarshkan Tehsil Dharampur Distt Mandi Himachal Pradesh (Online Proposal No FP/HP/MIN/118435/2021.

Sir,

Kindly refer to Assistant Inspector General of Forests MoEF & CC GOI letter/File No. 8-04/2025-FC dated 16.02.2026, As regards, it is respectfully submitted that a detailed site verification report was obtained from the Range Forest Officer, Dharampur, regarding the water flow condition of the Son Khad in the vicinity of the proposed mining lease area.

2. As per the field report, during the rainy season the river experiences substantial flow; however, after cessation of monsoon, the discharge reduces considerably and remains negligible to low during winter and summer months. It has further been reported that, except during peak monsoon, local inhabitants occasionally use the riverbed area for crossing due to minimal flow conditions. Continuous perennial flow is not observed in the said stretch.

3. The proposed mining area has been examined in light of the above ground realities. It is submitted that the mining activity is proposed strictly outside the active flowing channel and shall not involve any diversion, obstruction, or alteration of the main stream of the river. Therefore, considering the seasonal nature of the river and the safeguards proposed by the User Agency, no adverse impact on the natural water flow regime is anticipated. The point-wise reply to the observations raised in the EDS as received from user agency is furnished below for kind consideration and further necessary action :-

Sr. No.	Observation (EDS)	Reply
1	Impact on water flow of Son Khad: As per the Site Inspection Report (SIR) of the Regional Office, the proposed mining activity is located on	User Agency submits as under :- The Son Khad (Soan) River is a seasonal river system where flow characteristics are primarily governed by monsoonal precipitation. During lean periods, the discharge remains negligible to very low, whereas in the rainy season, the river exhibits high velocity and increased sediment transport. 1. Assessment of Possible Impacts on Water Flow (a) Alteration of Natural Flow Regime

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	<p>the bank of Son Khad, a seasonal river. The proposed mining lease area lies between the forest area and the mainstream of Son Khad, and access to the lease area requires crossing the mainstream of the river. During the inspection conducted in the last week of December, water flow was observed in Son Khad. Accordingly, the possible impacts arising from disturbance to the water flow due to crossing of the mainstream need to be evaluated, and appropriate mitigation measures are required to be adopted. Copy of the SIR is enclosed herewith. In view of the above, the State Government is requested to furnish details regarding:</p> <p>a. the possible impacts of the proposed</p>	<p>Since the proposed mining lease area is located on the bank/outside the active flowing channel, no in-stream mining or obstruction to the thalweg (main flow channel) is proposed. Therefore, the natural flow regime of the Son Khad River will not be altered.</p> <p>(b) Channel Morphology & Bank Stability Improper excavation near riverbanks can potentially:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induce bank erosion, • Cause channel widening or shifting, • Increase sediment load downstream. <p>However, the proposed mining operations shall be restricted to the approved lease boundary outside the active channel, maintaining a safe setback distance from the riverbank as per statutory norms.</p> <p>(c) Surface Runoff and Siltation During the monsoon, runoff from mining areas may carry suspended solids into the river if not controlled. This could temporarily increase turbidity.</p> <p>(d) Groundwater–Surface Water Interaction Given the seasonal nature of the river and limited base flow, mining restricted above the groundwater table will not interfere with groundwater recharge or base flow contribution.</p> <p>2. Conclusion on Impact</p> <p>Considering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The seasonal nature of the Son Khad River, • Very low discharge during non-monsoon months, • Mining confined to the bank area outside the active channel, • No diversion, obstruction, or in-stream excavation proposed, <p>The proposed mining activity will not affect the natural water flow of the Son Khad River. Flow variations will continue to be governed solely by seasonal rainfall patterns.</p> <p>3. Proposed Mitigation Measures</p> <p>To ensure zero or negligible hydrological impact, the following measures shall be implemented:</p> <p>1. Safety Buffer / Setback Distance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a minimum safe distance from the active river channel as per State Mining Rules and MoEF&CC guidelines. • No excavation within the floodplain or active flow channel. <p>2. Controlled Mining Depth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mining depth shall be restricted as per the approved mining plan. • No excavation below the groundwater table. <p>3. Riverbank Protection</p>

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	<p>mining activity on the water flow of the Son Khad River; and</p> <p>b. the mitigation measures proposed to address such impacts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain a natural berm/barrier between the mining area and the river. • Strengthening of banks through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boulder pitching where required, • Plantation of native grasses and shrubs for slope stabilization. <p>4. Drainage & Silt Control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of garland drains around mining pits. • Installation of siltation ponds/sedimentation tanks to trap suspended solids before discharge. • Check dams/temporary silt barriers during the monsoon. <p>5. Monsoon Management Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspension of mining operations during peak monsoon/high flow conditions. • Regular inspection of the lease boundary for erosion risk. <p>6. Regular Monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periodic monitoring of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surface water quality (TSS, turbidity, pH), • Riverbank stability, • Channel morphology. • Submission of monitoring reports to regulatory authorities. <p>7. Progressive Reclamation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backfilling and grading of mined-out areas. • Development of a greenbelt along the lease boundary. <p>4. Overall Environmental Safeguard Statement</p> <p>The mining activity is confined to the bank area and does not involve diversion, channel modification, or obstruction of the Son Khad River. With the implementation of the above mitigation measures, the project will ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No alteration of river hydrology, • No adverse impact on seasonal water flow, • No significant increase in sediment load, • Maintenance of the natural drainage pattern.

Submitted for further necessary action at your end please.


Divisional Forest Officer,
Joginder Nagar Forest Division