

**OFFICE OF APCCF FOREST CONSERVATION & NODAL OFFICER UTTARAKHAND,
INDIRA NAGAR, DEHRADUN**

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Letter No -1734/FP/UK/OTHERS/44884/2020 Dehradun: dated 26 December 2020

To,

Sandeep Sharma,
AIG (FC Division), MoEF&CC,
GoI, Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,
Aliganj, Jorbagh Road,
New Delhi-110003

Sub: Proposal for seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for non-forestry use of 87.0815 ha. of forest land for "Expansion of the Jolly Grant Airport" under Forest Division and District Dehradun of the State of Uttarakhand. (Online Proposal No. FP/UK/others/44884/2020)

Ref: MoEF&CC, GoI, letter No. 8-19/2002-FC dated 09th Oct, 2020.

Kindly refer the above dated letter regarding clarifications on the referred forest land transfer proposal for the expansion of the Jolly Grant Airport under Dehradun Forest Division of the State of Uttarakhand. Clarifications are given below:-

Sl. No.	Detail of queries	Answer/Compliance
1	The area proposed for diversion falls under High Conservation Value area and also that will cause fragmentation of the riverside forests which is situated between the existing runway and the river. Out of the 87.0815 ha. Proposed area to be diverted 47.0 ha. area falls under MDF. Therefore the State Govt. may explore alternatives for the proposal such as acquiring area lying north of the existing runway.	<p>Dehradun Airport is Uttarakhand state's most important existing Airport. It provides air connectivity to people of this state to various cities across India and is also a gateway to tourists and pilgrims visiting the Garhwal region of this mountain state. Uttarakhand shares an international border with China and Nepal and thus this airport is also of immense strategic importance, especially in view of its proximity to the LAC and the current geopolitical situation on our northern borders.</p> <p>In addition to the above, this airport also plays a very important role in rescue, relief and rehabilitation works during any disasters across the state. Large aircraft need to operate from this airfield during such emergencies. As such it is of immense importance for the state and the country.</p> <p>Currently, the runway at Dehradun is equipped to enable the landing of only narrow body jets. However, in view of the increasing passenger traffic, the AAI has projected an urgent need to upgrade the runway and other existing amenities at Dehradun. Construction of a new Modular Integrated Terminal Building is nearing completion. The present runway is very short and as per the safety standard of DGCA, the runway needs to be extended for safe landing of large aircraft. The requirement of large aircraft to operate during any emergencies for rescue, relief and rehabilitation also necessitates the up gradation of runway and other related infrastructure at this airport.</p> <p>The proposed alignment of forest land is the only option for carrying out extension of the runway. There is no other alternate option which is technically feasible, as the alignment of runway cannot be changed.</p> <p>It is reiterated here that the setting of a Greenfield airport at any other location is not feasible as the availability of land is limited. Such exercise would potentially inflict greater loss of natural resources such as standing trees, would incur huge costs and would render a large investment which is already in place at the existing facility as in fructuous. As such, the alternate option does not exist in this case.</p>

		<p>With regards to query on this area being a High conservation Value area, the following points are being highlighted:</p> <p>1-As per Champion & Seth classification the proposed forest land falls in following forest type :</p> <p>1- Type3/ISI-(Low Alluvial Savannah Woodland) 2- 2- Type5/IS2--(Khair Sissoo Forest)</p> <p>The density of the proposed forest area varies from 0.2 to 0.4 that is open forest. The Site Inspection Report uploaded as Additional Information at serial no.-13 in Part-II provides details on this. The dominant species of the area include Khair, Teak, Shisham, Kanju and Jheengan etc.</p> <p>2-The proposed area includes about 30 ha of CA plantation done in 2017-18. It is proposed that the amount of money spent on carrying out CA will be charged in addition to the normal dues from user agency. The numbers of trees those will be affected are about 9745. An analysis of these trees, diameter class wise are also given below:-</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="632 705 1465 857"> <thead> <tr> <th>0-1</th> <th>1-2</th> <th>2-3</th> <th>3-4</th> <th>4-5</th> <th>5-6</th> <th>6-7</th> <th>7-8</th> <th>8-9</th> <th>> 9</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2441</td> <td>3706</td> <td>1551</td> <td>732</td> <td>530</td> <td>405</td> <td>217</td> <td>74</td> <td>33</td> <td>56</td> <td>9745</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25.05%</td> <td>38.03%</td> <td>15.91%</td> <td>7.5%</td> <td>5.4%</td> <td>4.15%</td> <td>2.2%</td> <td>0.75%</td> <td>0.33%</td> <td>0.574%</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The table indicates that about 79% of trees of various species that will be affected because of this land transfer proposal comprise mere pole crop. Hence the number of trees to be felled is not a true indicator of the losses to this area on account of the proposed expansion.</p> <p>3- Undergrowth such as grasses, herbs and shrubs are very scanty due to adverse soil condition and low moisture level which also indicates poor site condition of the proposed forest area.</p> <p>4- The wildlife census estimates carried out in the area do not indicate continuous occupation of the area by high value charismatic species such as elephants or leopards, rather they are transient and use the area sparingly and intermittently. However, keeping in view these aspects, necessary wildlife mitigation plan is already submitted for wildlife clearance before the Standing Committee of National Board of Wildlife.</p> <p>5- Further there is no grassland exists in the proposed area.</p> <p>6- The Jakhan river nearby is also seasonal in which water is available only during the rainy season.</p> <p>The above indicators show that the proposed area for the project is not a high value conservation area.</p> <p>Further, as stated above, there is no viable alternative for the proposed activity.</p>	0-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	> 9	Total	2441	3706	1551	732	530	405	217	74	33	56	9745	25.05%	38.03%	15.91%	7.5%	5.4%	4.15%	2.2%	0.75%	0.33%	0.574%	
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2	<p>As per DSS analysis the entire proposed forest area for diversion falls within the Shivalik Elephant Reserve and Elephant corridors within its 1 km radius. Moreover, the notified Kansaro-Barkot Elephant corridor is located within 5 km radius. The State Government should consider avoiding these sensitive areas and explore alternative lands.</p>	<p>While it is true that the area forms part of Shivalik Elephant Reserve, it is not an identified elephant corridor. Further, it is not in close proximity to the core & critical elephant habitat of Rajaji Tiger Reserve. The Kansaro-Barkot Elephant Corridor is also located atleast 4 to 5 km away from the proposed site. However occasionally, elephants cross over the area through the Jakhan river as explained in para above. Taking that into account, necessary wildlife mitigation is proposed for the diversion of the forest land. The proposal has already been placed before the Standing Committee of NBWL for approval.</p> <p>As explained in the para above, the proposed project is related to the expansion of existing Dehradun Airport which includes extension of the runway as per the standards prescribed for air safety and related aspects and thus any alternate location for this project is practically not feasible.</p>																																	
3	<p>Proposed forest land is located within 10 km. radius of Rajaji National Park/Tiger Reserve, therefore, status of Wildlife Clearance/comments of chief</p>	<p>The proposed wildlife clearance proposal has been approved from State Board of Wildlife in its 15th Meeting dated 29-06-2020. The project proposal has been forwarded as proposal no. FP/UK/Others/5156/2020 dated 28-10-2020 from State Government Uttarakhand to Govt. of India for getting approval from the Standing Committee of National Board of Wildlife.</p>																																	

	Wildlife Warden and NTCA may be furnished.	
4	PDF file namely "DM's Letter for non availability of Civil Soyam Land for CA" as uploaded under column 13 (v) part-II is not accessible. Moreover, it is to inform that, certificate from Chief Secretary of the State for non-availability of the non-forest land for CA is required.	The certificate regarding non availability of non forest land from Chief Secretary, Uttarakhand is attached online on Parivesh Portal as additional information at serial no.-31 in part-I (Attachment-1).
5	CA scheme is given for only 5 years. As per the FCA, 1980 Comprehensive Guidelines para 2.8 (ii) (e) detailed work schedule including year wise operations, soil & moisture conservation, regeneration cleaning, silvicultural and other activities as prescribed in years and annual total costs in conformity with cost norms of the State/UT needs to be taken up Accordingly CA scheme including maintenance for 10 years be submitted.	Revised CA scheme including 10 years maintenance with all the required operations has been attached in Parivesh Portal in Part-II as additional information at serial no.14 . (Attachment - IA)
6	The ministry had accorded approval for EXTENSION OF JOLLY GRANT AIR STRIP for use of 82.15 hectare forest land on 17.02.2003. The User Agency has not submitted details of old proposal in the online application part-I column B (B-1).	Details of old proposal for extension of Jollygrant Airport for use of 82.15 hectare forest land which was approved on 17.02.2003 has been attached in the online application part-I column b (B-1) as additional information at serial no. 32 (Attachment-2).
7	Whether any approval for expansion/any other activity related to Jolly Grant Airport given by RO Dehradun /Lucknow?	No
8	The status of the compliance report of the previous approval dated 17.02.2003 is required.	The status of the compliance report of the previous approval is uploaded online as additional information in part-I at serial no. 37 (Attachment-3)
9	KML file of the already diverted forest land be provided.	KML file of the already diverted area for previous expansion of Airport in 2003 is annexed as soft copy in the form of CD. (Attachment-4).
10	Details of the employment generation may be uploaded in PARIVESH portal.	Details of the employment generation have been uploaded in part-I as additional information at serial no. 34 of Parivesh Portal. (Attachment-5)
11	Undertaking to bear the cost of CA, NPV and Addle. NPV is not given.	The undertaking to bear the cost of CA, NPV and additional NPV has been given by User Agency which has been uploaded in Part-I of the Parivesh portal by User Agency as additional information at serial no. 38 (Attachment-6).
12	Approved muck disposal plan be submitted.	Most of the muck likely to be generated at the time of construction during the excavation work will be used for refilling of the plinth area and for the construction of runway. As such, there will not be any need for disposal of muck in any other location outside the project area. As per the arrangement the User Agency will submit a muck disposal plan through the Airport Authority of India, Dehradun once the MOU for the project is signed between the State and AAI. The information regarding this para has been uploaded by User Agency as additional information at serial no. 35 of Part-I. (Attachment-7)
13	Brief details of the activity proposed on 49.6725 ha.	The details have been attached in part-I on Parivesh Portal as additional information at serial no. 36 . As explained in para above the detail plan will be submitted once the MOU is signed between State & AAI. (Attachment-8)

14	Forest type (as per Champion & Seth Classification) present in the proposed area of diversion may be provided.	As per Champion & Seth classification the proposed forest land falls in the following category of forest type : 1. Type 3/ISI - (Low Alluvial Savannah Woodland) 2. Type 5/IS2 - (Khair-Sissoo Forest)
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Enclosure as above

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26/12/20
(DJK Sharma)
APCCF & Nodal officer
Uttarakhand, Dehradun.

Letter No 1734 / FP/UK/OTHERS/44884/2020 Dehradun: dated 26, Dec, 2020

Copy Forwarded to the following for information and necessary action:-

- 1- Principal Secretary, Forest and Environment, Govt. of Uttarakhand, Dehradun.
- 2- Secretary Civil Aviation Department, Government of Uttarakhand.
- 3- PCCF (HoFF), 85, Rajpur Road, Uttarakhand, Dehradun.

(DJK Sharma)
APCCF & Nodal officer
Uttarakhand, Dehradun.