

8-7/2024-FC
Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
(Forest Conservation Division)

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,
Aliganj, Jor Bag Road,
New Delhi - 110003.
Dated: June, 2024
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To

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

Sub: Proposal for seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Section 2 of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 for non-forestry use of 134.69 ha of forest land for Expansion of Kulda Open Cast Coal Mining Project of Basundhara Area of Mahanandi Coalfields Limited in Sundargarh District under Sundargarh Forest Division-reg.

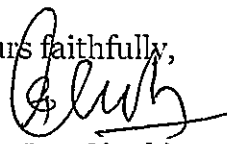
Madam/Sir,

I am directed to refer to the State Government of Odisha's letter No. FE-DIV-FLD-0033-2024-7679/FE&CC dated 25.04.2024 on the above subject seeking prior approval of the Central Government in accordance with Section 2 of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 and to say that after examination of the proposal the following shortcoming has been observed:

- i. 7306 trees has been reported as project affected trees in the online proposal while the inspection report of the DFO mention the same as 30,441. The same needs to be rectified by the user agency by providing the correct number of trees involved in the project.
- ii. Compensatory afforestation, as per the provisions of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Rules, 2023, should be raised over non-forest/revenue forest land or the lands accredited under ACA can also be swapped in lieu of CA. The State Government may, therefore, inform the details of mined out and reclaimed non-forest lands available with M/S MCL and possibility of using them as CA.
- iii. As per analysis of the land use details given in the proposals following discrepancies have been observed and same be clarified:
 - a) State Government's forwarding letter mentions total forest area involved in the Kulda OCP as 354.06 ha while from the perusal of approval granted in the past, the total forest area comes out to be 362.58 ha (227.89+134.69). The State Government therefore, while rectifying this discrepancy should clarify the exact involvement of forest area in the extant proposals as well as in the approvals granted in the past.

- b) As per detail provided in the Mining Plan (Page-1 of Chapter-2), the total lease area has been revised to 921.305 ha from the 634.20 ha used in Phase-I i.e. additional increase of 287.10 ha is involved in the phase-II. R&R Plan indicates the total area involved in the expansion project as 284.10 ha while as per proposal submitted online and approved Mining Plan, the total incremental area is indicated as 295.62 ha. Discrepancy may be rectified by the State.
- c) An area of 8.52 ha from the already diverted forest land of 227.89 ha is also being used in the extant expansion proposal, which amounts to modification of approval dated 8.08.2007. The State Government therefore, needs to provide a KML file of the already approved area and area being utilized in the extant extension proposal. Change in the land use of other components of the existing project. If any also be informed by the State Government.
- iv. Examination of the cost benefit analysis revealed that the loss of the EG&S has been estimated by taking the NPV value corresponding to the lower canopy vegetation density. The DFC in Part-II indicated the canopy density of RF and of Revenue Forests as 0.6 and 0.4, respectively while the corresponding values taken for the estimation of loss of EG&SS are 0.5 and 0.3, respectively. As estimation of most of the parameters is based on the value of NPV, it will, therefore, be appropriate that entire CB analysis may be revisited by taking into account the correct canopy density as mentioned in the online Part-II.
- v. The State Government in its forwarding letter, adverting to submission made by the DFO, mentioned the peak rated capacity of the mine is 21 MTPA while approval dated 10.06.2020 of the Board of Directors of the MCL for Mining Plan, submitted online, mentioned the capacity as 18.75 MTPA. The State Government may therefore confirm if any revised approval for enhancing the capacity of the mine to 21 MTPA conveyed by the BOD of MCL.
- vi. It is observed that proposed project is in the proximity of the Basundhara river and its tributaries such as Chattajornallah. Impact of the proposed expansion of mining on Chattajornallah nallah and mitigation measures, if any, needed to be undertaken needs to be informed by the State.
- vii. The measures proposed by the user agency for the transportation of the excavated coal from the mines to the nearest road/rail head also needs to be furnished by the State.
- viii. A monitoring report on the status of compliance of conditions, stipulated in the approval dated 8.08.2007 granted over 227.89 ha of forest land.
- ix. Proposal involves rehabilitation of 975 families while the R&R Plan submitted online is already being implemented. The State Government may therefore inform if the Plan submitted along with the proposal include the 975 families also and the status of approval of the R&R Plan by the competent authority whether obtained or yet to be obtained.

In view of above, the State Government is requested to furnish information, as indicated above, for further consideration of the proposal in the Ministry.

Yours faithfully,

(Charan Jeet Singh)
Scientist 'D'

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Copy to:

- i. PCCF (HoFF), Department of Forests, Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
- ii. Dy. DGF (Central), Regional Office of the MoEF&CC at Bhubaneswar.
- iii. Nodal Officer (FCA), Department of Forests, Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
- iv. User Agency
- v. Monitoring Cell, FC Division, MoEF&CC, New Delhi for uploading on PARIVESH portal.