

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

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,
Jor Bag Road, Aliganj,
New Delhi – 110003
Dated: 8th August, 2023

To,

The Principal Secretary (Forests),
Government of Madhya Pradesh,
Bhopal.

Subject: Diversion of 206.826 ha forest land in the Forest compartment No PF-400, 401, 409, 410, 413, 414 & 422 of Damua Range under West Chhindwara Forest Division for the Tandsi Under-ground Coal Mining Project by M/s Western Coalfield Limited (WCL) under Chhindwara District of Madhya Pradesh State (Online No. FP/MP/MIN/44238/2020) - regarding.

Madam/Sir,

I am directed to refer the PCCF (LM) and Nodal Officer, FCA, 1980, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh letter No. F-1/833/2022/10-11/3123 dated 13.07.2023 forwarding a fresh proposal on the above subject seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Section-2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. After examining the proposal, the following shortcomings have been observed:-

- i. The Ministry vide letter no. 11-164/2010-FC dated 25.03.2013 related to Forest and Environment Clearance to the coal mining project in Pench Kanhan Coalfield located in Chhindwara District, Madhya Pradesh regarding Tandsi- I & Tandsi-II Coal Mine decided that after exhaustion of the underground reserve no further activity in the mine site, especially conversion to open cast should be allowed and regarding **Tandsi-III Coal Mine decided that no mining activity may be allowed.** The State Government shall provide its comments regarding present proposal keeping in view the said letter dated 25.03.2013 of the Ministry.
- ii. The Government of Madhya Pradesh vide their letter No. F-1/833/2022/10-11/3123 dated 13.07.2023 forwarded the proposal for diversion of 206.826 ha forest land for Tandsi under-ground coal mining project as a fresh diversion proposal without any reference to the renewal of the existing mine or diversion of forest area earlier, whereas, the DFO, Chhindwara (West) in his letter dated 15.06.2021 mentioned that an area of 299.44 ha was diverted earlier vide Ministry letter No. 8-145/86-FC dated 20.11.1991. The above variation needs clarification along with status of compliance of the stipulated conditions therein shall be submitted.
- iii. The lease document submitted with the proposal pertains to the 3rd April 1976. The justification for submission of the proposal against the same at this belated stage needs submission. Moreover, the area mentioned in the lease document is 1756 ha. which indicates that either the instant proposal is not a standalone project, or the the lease document does not pertain to the instant proposal. A detailed justification in this regard shall be submitted.
- iv. The Conservator Forests Chhindwara in his inspection report has mentioned that the area proposed for diversion is in seven patches and there is no clarity regarding the connectivity of the patches with each other. The justification in this regard is required to be submitted.
- v. It has been reported that the total 1961.654 ha land has been acquired under the MCR,

1980 & CB Act 1957 out of which 206.826 ha forest land has been proposed for diversion whereas as per the Villages wise breakup & Component wise breakup given in online Part-I, the details have given for total 373.16 ha land (Forest+ Non-Forest). The above variation needs clarification along with complete KML file of the Forest/Non-forest land involved in the project shall be submitted.

- vi. A detailed chronology indicating the history of mining lease and its renewals along with the detail of approvals accorded under FCA,1980 for the entire lease area shall be submitted.
- vii. As per the component wise breakup, the entire area including forest and non-forest land has been proposed for mining only. The State shall submit the details as to where the other ancillary activities like mineral processing, transportation, coal handling, infrastructure etc will be located.
- viii. The status of Mine lease validity for the earlier approved 299.44 ha forest land shall be examined by the State Govt. and shall submit the present status of earlier approved forest land.
- ix. Status of reclamation measures undertaken by the user agency in their lease area in case of earlier approvals as per the Progressive Mine Closure Plans and gaps if any, shall be intimated by the State.
- x. The Cost Benefit analysis is required to be submitted as per the format prescribed in the FCA, 1980 Handbook of guidelines dated 28.03.2019 keeping in view the revised rates of NPV dated 06.01.2022.
- xi. In the part-1 of the application form, against the copy of approval of the mining plan the User Agency has submitted a letter dated 23.05.2007 communicating the salient features observed during the presentation of the Mining plan. A copy of the approval of the mining shall therefore be submitted.
- xii. The relevance of the Mining plan under consideration in the year 2007 has to be examined in view of the technological advancement in the subsequent years. The State Govt. shall examine the matter and submit a revised Mining plan along with Progressive mine reclamation/ closure plan.
- xiii. 3D subsidence report has been submitted in respect of Dhau North UG mine. Therefore, 3D subsidence report for the instant project shall be uploaded/ submitted.
- xiv. The detail of safeguards proposed/ required in view of the location of the proposed area within a Tiger corridor shall be submitted.
- xv. The distance of proposed forest area from Satpura Tiger Reserve is 6.18 km. The area has a recorded presence of Tigers as elaborated in the SIR of DFO concerned. Therefore, the applicability of NBWL/ SBWL Clearance shall be examined and intimated by the CWLW along with his comments on the proposal..
- xvi. The details of coal evacuation plan and involvement of forest land, if any, shall be intimated.
- xvii. The State Govt. recommended the proposal subject to a study which is to be carried out by the WII, Dehradun and the State Forest Research Institute, Jabalpur to curb the noise level arises due to mining and allied activities. However, the copy of undertaking from the user agency to bear the cost of study has not been submitted. The same needs submission.
- xviii. The component wise/ purpose wise KML file/Shape file of the 299.44 ha already diverted forest land shall be submitted.
- xix. Calculated area of Mining lease boundary through KML file is found 373.183 ha instead of 1318.283 ha as per the Mining plan whereas the State Govt. reported total area involved in the project is 1961.654 ha, further the lease document submitted mentions the area as 1756 ha. This variation needs clarification along with the KML file.
- xx. Out of 373.183 ha Mining lease KML file uploaded on PARIVESH, total area of forest land present in the Mining lease is found 219.852 ha whereas the user agency has only applied for diversion of 206.826 ha. This needs clarification.
- xxi. High resolution satellite imagery shows the presence of Road, River (Tambiya Nadi) and plantation work in the forest land proposed for diversion. This needs clarification.

xxii. Tambiya River and its tributary are flowing through the forest land proposed for diversion. In this regard the comments of the Water Resource Department of the State/State Government on the effect of underground mining on ground water recharge and existing water tank and measures to protect river subsidence due to under-ground mining shall be submitted. The details of study carried out, if any in this regard shall also be submitted.

Accordingly, it is requested to furnish the above mentioned information to this Ministry for further consideration of the proposal.

Yours sincerely,

Signed by

Suneet Bhardwaj

Date: 08-08-2023 17:55:44

(Suneet Bhardwaj)

Assistant Inspector General of Forests

Copy to:

1. The PCCF (HoFF), Department of Forest, Government of Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal;
2. The Dy. DGF (Central), Regional Office, MoEF&CC, Bhopal;
3. The Nodal Officer (FCA), Department of Forest Government of Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal;
4. User Agency;
5. Monitoring Cell, FC Division, MoEF & CC, New Delhi for uploading on PARIVESH portal.