

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

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Indira Paryavaran Bhawan  
Jor Bag Road, Aliganj  
New Delhi - 110003.  
**Dated: 13th June, 2023**

**OFFICE MEMORANDUM**

**Sub: Issues referred by the Department of Telecommunication, Ministry of Communication regarding streamlining the process of approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 – reg.**

The undersigned is directed to refer to Department of Telecommunication, Govt of India's DO letter dated 13.03.2023 regarding above mentioned subject and to say that the matter referred in the DO letter was discussed in the meeting of the Advisory Committee held on 25.04.2023. After thorough discussion the Committee has recommended the following:

- i. Authorization of the user agency for laying OFC in the RoW at their own is not tenable in view of the fact that the proposals for laying of OFCs cable fall under re-diversion category and not under change in land use category and Ministry has already taken a number of initiatives such as replacement of length Form-A with simpler Form-E and authorization of Nodal Officer (FCA) in the State Government to grant approval to proposals pertaining to laying of OFC cable.
  - ii. Considering the mobile towers as a commercial activity, the provisions of General Approval given under para 4.3 of the Handbook of FC Act, 1980 may not be extended to the private operators for laying of OFCs in the forest areas as the same was considered only for the public utility projects to be implemented by the Government Departments involving area up to 1 ha and felling of maximum up to 50 trees per ha, which is under consideration for a clarification.
  - iii. Construction of mobile towers in the forest areas may not be considered at par with the communication posts as mobile towers involve much more area for construction and it will also tantamount to more biotic and abiotic disturbances to forests due to ancillary activities such construction of approach/access road, establishment of generator sets, electric lines, maintenance, etc.
2. Moreover, it is to inform that all such proposals are less than 5 ha and are to be decided at the level of respective Regional Officer of this Ministry without taking the proposals to Regional Empowered Committee for its recommendation. The Ministry has advised the IROs to process such proposals on priority and in expeditious manner.

This issues with the approval of the competent authority in the Ministry.

Yours Sincerely,

(Charan Jeet Sing)  
Scientist 'D'

To

Additional Secretary  
Ministry of Communications  
Department of Telecommunications  
Room no. 318, Sanchar Bhawan  
20, Ashoka Road, New Delhi – 11001

Copy to:

1. Principal Secretary (Forests), All States/UTs
2. PCCF (HoFF), All States/UTs
3. Addl. PCCF & Nodal Officers (FCA), All States/UTs
4. PSO to Secretary, MoEF&CC/ Sr.PPS to DGF&SS/PS to ADGF (FC)