

No. L-11011/47/2011-IA.II(M)
Government of India
Ministry of Environment & Forests

Paryavaran Bhawan,
C.G.O. Complex, Lodhi Road,
New Delhi-110003.

Dated: 24th June, 2013

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject: Guidelines for consideration of proposals for grant of environmental clearance under EIA Notification, 2006 for mining of 'brick earth' and 'ordinary earth' having lease area less than 5 ha – regarding categorization as Category 'B2'

The Hon'ble Supreme Court, vide its order dated 27.02.2012 in I.A.No.12-13 of 2011 in SLP (C) No.19628-19629 of 2009 titled Deepak Kumar etc. Vs. State of Haryana & Ors. has inter alia ordered that leases of minor mineral including their renewal for an area less than 5 ha be granted by the State / Union Territory only after getting environment clearance (EC) from the Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF). In order to ensure compliance of the aforesaid order of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, MoEF issued an OM No.L-11011/47/2011-IA.II(M) dated 18.05.2012 stating inter alia that all mining projects of minor minerals including their renewal, irrespective of the size of the lease would henceforth require prior EC and that the projects of minor minerals with lease area less than 5 ha would be treated as Category "B" as defined in EIA Notification, 2006 and will be considered by the respective State Environment Impact Assessment Authorities (SEIAAs) notified by MoEF and following the procedure prescribed under the EIA Notification, 2006.

2. MoEF has received a number of representations conveying problems being faced by the brick kiln manufacturers in obtaining EC for 'brick earth' mined by them for making bricks and by the developers of road projects in respect of mining of 'ordinary earth' used for road construction. The brick kiln manufacturers have requested that as the digging of 'brick earth' for making bricks is a small scale activity requiring digging only upto a certain depth, the activity may be kept outside the purview of EC. The project proponents developing roads have represented that the 'ordinary earth' required for road construction is generally taken from the farmers / individuals along the road alignment from their borrows. It would be impractical to ask the farmers / individuals to obtain EC for such digging. In a nutshell, the arguments being put forth are that while digging of 'brick earth' for brick making and 'ordinary earth' for road making do not have serious environmental implications, the provisioning for EC for such operations is impeding these development activities because of practical problems in obtaining EC.

3. MoEF vide OM No.F.No.J-11013/12/2013-IA-II(I) dated 30.01.13 has constituted an Expert Committee, under the Chairmanship of Director, NEERI, Nagpur, to categorize Category “B” projects / activities into Category “B1” and “B2” under EIA Notification, 2006 and review classification of projects / activities into “A” and “B” and General conditions as contained in the aforesaid Notification. The issues raised by brick kiln manufacturers regarding ‘brick earth’ and road developers in respect of ‘ordinary earth’ were referred by MoEF to this Expert Committee to give their recommendations. The Committee deliberated upon these issues and has since given its recommendations in the matter.

4. The recommendations of the Committee have been examined by MoEF and the following has been decided:

(a) The activities of borrowing / excavation of ‘brick earth’ and ‘ordinary earth’, upto an area less than 5 ha, may be categorized under ‘B2’ Category subject to the following guidelines in terms of the provisions under ‘7.I Stage(1)-Screening’ of EIA Notification, 2006:

- (i) The activity associated with borrowing/excavation of ‘brick earth’ and ‘ordinary earth’ for purpose of brick manufacturing, construction of roads, embankments etc. shall not involve blasting.
- (ii) The borrowing/excavation activity shall be restricted to a maximum depth of 2 m below general ground level at the site.
- (iii) The borrowing/excavation activity shall be restricted to 2 m above the ground water table at the site.
- (iv) The borrowing/excavation activity shall not alter the natural drainage pattern of the area.
- (v) The borrowed/excavated pit shall be restored by the project proponent for useful purpose(s).
- (vi) Appropriate fencing all around the borrowed/excavated pit shall be made to prevent any mishap.
- (vii) Measures shall be taken to prevent dust emission by covering of borrowed/excavated earth during transportation.
- (viii) Safeguards shall be adopted against health risks on account of breeding of vectors in the water bodies created due to borrowing/excavation of earth.
- (ix) Workers / labourers shall be provided with facilities for drinking water and sanitation.
- (x) A berm shall be left from the boundary of adjoining field having a width equal to at least half the depth depth of proposed excavation.

(xi) A minimum distance of 15 m from any civil structure shall be kept from the periphery of any excavation area.

(xii) The concerned SEIAA while considering granting environmental clearance for such activity for brick earth / ordinary earth will prescribe the guidelines as stated at (i) to (xi) above and specify that the clearance so granted shall be liable to be cancelled in case of any violation of above guidelines.

(b) Notwithstanding what has been stated at (a) above, the following will apply:-

- (i) No borrowing of earth / excavation of 'brick earth' or 'ordinary earth' shall be permitted in case the area of borrowing/ excavation is within 1 km of boundary of national parks and wild life sanctuaries.
- (ii) In case the area of borrowing / excavation is likely to result into a cluster situation i.e. if the periphery of one borrow area is less than 500 m from the periphery of another borrow area and the total borrow area equals or exceeds 5 ha, the activity shall become Category 'B1' Project under the EIA Notification, 2006. In such a case, mining operations in any of the borrow areas in the cluster will be allowed only if the environmental clearance has been obtained in respect of the cluster.

This issues with the approval of the Competent Authority.


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Director

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To

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3. Chairman, CPCB
4. Chairpersons / Member Secretaries of all the SPCBs/UTPCCs

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