

F. No. 22-25/2020-IA.III
Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
Impact Assessment Division

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,
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Dated: 14th September 2020

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject: Conducting Public Hearing during the CoVID19 pandemic restrictions – reg.


Attention is invited to Clause 7(i) of Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006, issued vide S.O.1533 (E), dated the 14th September, 2006 and as amended from time to time, wherein prior environmental clearance process for all Category 'A' and Category B1 projects or activities, *inter alia*, comprises of stages including public consultation before finalization of EIA and its appraisal by the Expert Appraisal Committee.

2. The Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs has imposed certain restrictions on public gatherings due to Novel Covid-19 pandemic and has laid down thresholds on the number of persons permitted to be physically present during such gatherings/meetings. The said restrictions are being amended from time to time. Vide order 40-3/2020-DM-I(A) dated 29th August 2020, the activities allowed in "Unlock-4" have been listed. The permitted activities include, social/ academic/ sports/ entertainment/ cultural/ religious/ political functions and other congregations with **a ceiling of 100 persons**, which will be permitted with effect from 21st September 2020, with mandatory wearing of face masks, social distancing, provision for thermal scanning and hand wash or use of sanitizers.

3. As the Public Consultation is mandated and forms an integral part of the Environment Clearance process, it is hereby directed that Public Hearing may be carried out in accordance with the order no. 40-3/2020-DM-I(A) dated 29th August 2020 issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India as amended from time to time taking into account the guidelines given below:

- i. The State/UT Pollution Control Boards/Committees shall restrict the number of persons gathered, to the ceiling specified by the Ministry of Home Affairs from time to time, for a single hearing and conduct the Public Hearing with adequate social distancing and other safe guards as issued by the Government from time to time.
- ii. If the number of participants is more than such ceiling, more than one Public Hearing shall be conducted by staggering the time and/or dates.

- iii. Use of virtual platform/online facilities may also be employed in addition to the physical Public Hearing process.
 - iv. The State/UT Pollution Control Boards/Committees may also obtain responses in writing from concerned persons having a plausible stake in the environmental aspects of the project or activity, through electronic means.
 - v. On completion of the said processes, the State/UT Pollution Control Boards/Committees shall submit the summary of the issues raised during physical public hearings or received in written or through e-mail or other electronic mode along with the response of the project proponent along with a certificate from District Magistrate or his authorized representative not below the rank of Additional District Magistrate, to the Regulatory Authority as per the procedure prescribed in EIA Notification 2006, as amended from time to time.
4. This issues with the approval of the competent authority.



(Sharath Kumar Pallerla)
Scientist 'F'/Director
IA (Policy)

To

1. Chairman of all State/UT Pollution Control Boards/Committees
2. Chairman of all the Expert Appraisal Committees
3. Chairman of all SEIAAs/SEACs
4. All the Officers of IA Division, MoEFCC
5. All District Collectors

Copy for information:

1. PS to Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change
2. PS to MoS (EF&CC)
3. PPS to Secretary(EF&CC)
4. PPS to AS(RSP) / AS (RA)
5. PPS to JS (GM)/ JS(AKN) / JS(SKB)
6. Website, MoEF&CC
7. Guard file


(Sharath Kumar Pallerla)
Scientist 'F'/Director