

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

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9th June, 2021

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

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

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 and/or the State Governments have imposed certain restrictions on public gatherings due to Novel Covid-19 pandemic and have laid down thresholds on the number of persons permitted to be physically present during such gatherings/meetings.

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 restrictions laid down by the Central Government and/or the State Governments from time to time and in consultation with the State authorities 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 Central Government and/or the State Governments 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 Central Government and/or the State Governments 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 OM supersedes the OM of even number dated 14th September 2020.
5. This is issued with the approval of the competent authority.



(A.K. Agrawal)
Director

To

1. Chairman of all the Expert Appraisal Committees
2. Chairperson/Member Secretaries of all the SEIAAs/SEACs
3. All the Officers of I.A. Division
4. Chairpersons/Member Secretaries of all SPCBs/UTPCCs
5. All District Collectors

Copy for information to:

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