

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(IA DIVISION-INDUSTRY-2 SECTOR)**

Dated: 08.05.2024

**Meeting ID: IA/IND2/13601/23/04/2024
MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE EXPERT APPRAISAL COMMITTEE
(INDUSTRY-2 SECTOR PROJECTS)
HELD ON 23rd April, 2024**

**Venue: Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change,
Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, Jor Bagh Road, New Delhi-
110003 through Video Conferencing (VC)**

(i) Opening Remarks by the Chairman: The Chairman made hearty welcome to the Committee members and appreciated the efforts of the Committee. After opening remarks, the Chairman opened the EAC meeting for further deliberations.

(ii) Confirmation of minutes: The EAC, having taken note that final minutes were issued after incorporating comments received from the EAC members on the minutes of its Meeting (ID: IA/IND2/13594/14/03/2024) held on 14th March, 2024 conducted through Video Conferencing (VC), confirmed the same.

(iii) Member Secretary informed the Members of the EAC that they may declare their conflict of interest before appraisal of any proposal and recuse from the meeting and the same shall be explicitly recorded in the Minutes of the meeting. Further, it was also informed that in case it is revealed later that in spite of the conflict of interest the Member had participated in the appraisal of the proposal, the responsibility for the same lies with the concerned Member and it may result in removal from the membership of EAC. After welcoming the Committee Members, discussion on each of the agenda items was taken up ad-seriatim.

(iv) Details of the proposals considered during the meeting conducted through Video Conferencing (VC), deliberations made and the

recommendations of the Committee are explained in the respective agenda items as under: -

Agenda No. 01

Proposed Development Drilling wells and Testing of Hydrocarbons in Duarmara Block in Margherita, District Tinsukia (Assam) by M/s Oilmax Energy Private Limited - Consideration of Environmental Clearance

[IA/AS/IND2/71746/2017, IA-J-11011/575/2017-IA-II(I)]

The project proponent and their accredited consultant M/s ABC Technolabs India Pvt Ltd, made a detailed presentation on the salient features of the project and informed that the proposal is for environmental clearance to the project for onshore development and production of oil & gas along with associated facilities by M/s Oilmax Energy Private Limited in an area of 8.91 sqkm located of Duarmara Block under Duarmara PML of Upper Assam basin, District Tinsukia (Assam).

The project involves development of three wells already drilled by M/s OIL followed by production of oil & gas from the Block, installation of Early Production System (EPS), laying of pipelines, etc. Mines and Minerals Department of the State Government of Assam has, vide letter dated 26th July, 2017, transferred Petroleum Mining Lease (PML) for an area of 8.91 sq km from M/s Oil India Ltd to the project proponent with the same validity period i.e. up to 25th November, 2029.

The project/activity is covered under category A of item 1(b) 'Offshore and onshore oil and gas exploration, development & production' of schedule to the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006, and requires appraisal at central level by sectoral Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC).

Terms of Reference for the project was issued on 22nd February 2018. Public Hearing for the proposed project has been conducted by the Assam State Pollution Control Board on 28th January 2019. The main issues raised during the public hearing are related to indirect /direct employment, land compensation, etc.

The block area available for the project is 8.91 sqkm. The estimated project cost is Rs.120 crore. Total capital cost earmarked towards environmental pollution control measures is Rs. 4.15 crores and the recurring cost (operation and maintenance) will be about Rs.1.8 crores per annum. Employment opportunity will be for 10 persons directly & 90 persons indirectly.

There are no National parks, Wildlife sanctuaries within 10 km distance from the block area. The Duarmara block is within reserve forest. Doom Dooma river is flowing through the block area.

Total fresh water requirement is 20cum/day, proposed to be met from bore well. Effluent of 4 cum/day quantity will be treated through mobile ETP system. There will be no discharge of treated/untreated waste water from the unit, and thus ensuring Zero Liquid Discharge. Power requirement will be 2000 KVA, which will be met from captive sources. DG sets (4 x 2000 KVA) are used as standby during developmental drilling activities.

There is no process emissions generation. Drill cutting will be separated from water based mud (WBM) and unusable drilling fluid will be stored in HDPE lined pit for solar drying for temporary storage. The cuttings/mud residues so stored will then be treated and disposed in accordance with CPCB regulations specified for onshore oil & gas industry.

Ambient air quality monitoring was carried out at 8 locations during January to March 2018 and the baseline data indicates the ranges of concentrations as: PM10 (22.8-50.1 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$), PM2.5 (12.2-26.1 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$), SO2 (<5- 6.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) and NO2 (6.6- 14.1 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$). AAQ modeling study for point source emissions indicates that the maximum incremental GLCs after the proposed project would be 0.48 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, 0.105 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ and 0.39 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ with respect to PM10, SOx and NOx. The resultant concentrations are within the National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

The project proponent has confirmed the expenditure towards CER @ 2% of the total project cost.

The project involves diversion of forest area of 9.31 ha in the Duarmara Block. Application for diversion of the forest land for non-forestry purpose has been submitted as per the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

The proposal was considered in 9th EAC (Ind-II) meeting held on 26th – 28th June, 2019 wherein EAC recommended the project for grant of EC subject to submission of Stage –I FC as the proposal involves diversion of forest area of 9.31 ha in the Duarmara Block.

As per recommendation of EAC, ADS was raised to submit Stage- I FC on 19.09.2019. PP has submitted Stage I FC for diversion of 3.92 Ha. However, the said Stage – I FC is recommended subject to court case Dr. Kashmira Kakati Vs Union of India & Ors in O.A. No. 19 of 2014 as the proposed drilling area is falling in the area of Dihing – Patkai Elephant reserve and other elephant corridors.

During deliberations following things were discussed:

- PP shall provide new approval on Drilling Plan from the DGH as the current plan of drilling was till 2019 which is no more valid to proceed further drilling.
- PP shall ensure that treated/ effluent will not be discharged to nearby water bodies and natural streams.
- As per recommendation of EAC meeting held on 19.09.2019 and extant rule position as per Ministry's OM dated 19th June 2014, Project Proponent was required to submit Stage- I FC within a maximum period of 18 months for issue of EC. However, PP submitted Stage-I FC on 29.12.2023 after a gap of more than 4 years.
- Further, EAC noted that the Stage-I FC has been issued subject to the outcome of the court case Dr. Kashmira Kakati Vs Union of India & Ors in O.A. No. 19 of 2014.
- As per the discussion held in the meeting, in view of long gap of more than four years, PP was asked to carry out a fresh baseline data collection of 3 months. Further, PP has been given relaxation for PH.
- Regarding proximity of eco-sensitive area, PP has reported that the proposed area is more than 10 km away from the 'area under dispute' in the court case Dr. Kashmira Kakati Vs Union of India & Ors in O.A. No. 19 of 2014 which is related to the Dihing – Patkai Elephant Reserve.
- EAC opined that the above mentioned corridor area cannot be fixed and may vary after the gap of 7 years. Accordingly, PP was asked to incorporate and submit the GIS-based corridor area data together with fresh baseline data of 3 months.

Accordingly, proposal was deferred for want of above additional information.

**List of the Expert Appraisal Committee (Industry-2) members
participated during Video Conferencing (VC) meeting**

S. No.	Name and Address	Position
1.	Shri S. C. Mann	Chairman
2.	Dr. J. S. Sharma	Member
3.	Prof. Y. V. Rami Reddy	Member
4.	Dr. Onkar Nath Tiwari	Member
5.	Shri. J.S. Kamyotra	Member
6.	Dr. Rahul Rameshrao Mungikar	Member
7.	Dr. Sanjay V. Patil	Member
8.	Dr. Siddhartha Singh	Member
9.	Dr. Vimal Kumar Hatwal, Scientist 'E'	Member Secretary
MoEFCC		
10.	Dr. Mahendra Phulwaria	Scientist 'C'
