Subject: Minutes of the meeting of the Working Group on developing software for monitoring pendency of mineral concession applications for forest clearance held on the 8th September, 2011.

The undersigned is directed to send herewith a copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Working Group on developing software for monitoring pendency of mineral concession applications for forest clearance, held on the 8th September, 2011.

2. Action taken on the points discussed and the decisions taken in the meeting may please be furnished to the undersigned by 16.9.2011.

Sd/-
(R.K. Malhotra)
Director
Tel. 23383958

1. Inspector General (FC), Ministry of Environment and Forests, Paryavaran Bhavan, New Delhi.

2. Senior Technical Director, NIC, Ministry of Mines

3. Technical Director, NIC, Ministry of Environment and Forests.

4. State Secretaries in charge of Mining and Geology in the States of:
   i) Chhattisgarh
   ii) Gujarat
   iii) Karnataka
   iv) Madhya Pradesh

Copy to:
PPS to Secretary (Mines)/ Sr. PPS to AS (M).
Minutes of the Meeting of the Working Group on developing software for monitoring pendency of mineral concession applications at the State Government level, held on Thursday, the 8th September, 2011 at Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi.

The third meeting of the Working Group on developing software for monitoring pendency of mineral concession applications for forest clearance was held under the chairmanship of Shri S.K. Srivastava, Additional Secretary (Mines) on Thursday, the 8th September, 2011 at Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi. List of participants is at Annexure.

2. Referring to the decisions taken in the last meeting of the Working Group held on 14.6.2011, AS (Mines) said that the proposed software was supposed to be operationalised by the MOEF by 31st July, 2011. He requested AIG (FC), MoEF to update the Working Group on the status of the software.

1. AIG (FC), MoEF informed that the proposed software would be operationalised in September, 2011. He said that the software would cover both - the pre-registration as well as the post-registration processes. Explaining the pre-registration part, he said that even if an application was incomplete in terms of the requisite information/documents, and was rejected by the Nodal Officer, the software would show it as received but pending for want of information/documents. However, he said, in case of the applications submitted online, the software would not accept incomplete applications, and hence would not capture their receipt. He mentioned that training was to be imparted to the officers and staff who would be using the software, which was taking time. He also mentioned that the guidelines on the subject had been prepared and were awaiting DG’s approval. AS (M) requested that action on these aspects may be expedited, and definitely completed within September, 2011.
2. To a query by AS (Mines), AIG, MoEF informed that the time-frame for disposal of forest clearance applications at the State level is 90 days. However, in cases involving an area over 40 hectares, the Central Government’s approval is also required, for which there is another 60 days’ time-limit.

3. AS (M) referred to the deliberations held in the last meeting of the Working Group, and re-emphasized the need for assigning a unique ID No. to each application. Senior Tech. Director, NIC observed that the unique ID No. in respect of each application could be generated by the software on the basis of the LOI No. issued by the State Governments. This was agreed to by the MoEF as well as the State Governments.

4. All State Governments expressed satisfaction over the tracking and monitoring process envisaged in the software.

5. On being informed by representative of the Government of Gujarat that they were seeking forest clearance in respect of all the applicants who applied for a mineral concession, AS (M) observed that such a procedure was not proper, and said that the application for forest clearance should be sought only on the basis of the LOI issued by the State Government in favour of the recommended applicant. AS (M) hoped that the guidelines to be issued by the MoEF on the subject should take care of all aspects, in order to ensure that a uniform system was operationalised across the country, and there was no deviation whatsoever therefrom. He further requested the representative of the MoEF that guidelines be finalized urgently and a soft copy of the same be made available to this Ministry by 15.9.2011.

6. AS (M) informed that the next meeting of the Central Coordination-cum-Empowered Committee (CEC) was scheduled to be held on 20th September, 2011, and that the issue of forest clearance was one of its long-standing agenda. He, therefore, asked AIG (FC) if he could get operationalisation of the software expedited so that it could be done before the CEC meeting. AIG (FC) assured that the MoEF would make all efforts in that regard.
7. Summing up the discussions, AS (M) requested the MoEF to take action on the agreed points in a time-bound manner, as follows:

i) Operationalise the software by 20th September, 2011, if possible;

ii) Conduct training programmes for the software functionaries around 15th September, 2011;

iii) Give a copy of the guidelines on the subject to the Ministry of Mines by 15th September, 2011 so that the same could be circulated among the State Governments and their suggestions could be considered in the CEC meeting on 20th September, 2011;

iv) Give relevant extracts of the Manual of Forest Clearance Procedures for circulation among the State Governments.

v) Give a list of the Nodal Officers for circulation among the State Governments by 15th September, 2011.

vi) Make a presentation on the software in the CEC meeting on 20th September, 2011.

10. The meeting ended with a Vote of Thanks to the Chair.

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Meeting of the Working Group on developing software for monitoring pendency of mineral concession applications at the State Government level, held on Thursday, the 8th September, 2011 at Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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REPRESENTATIVES FROM MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS AND THE STATE GOVERNMENTS

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