

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3743
TO BE ANSWERED ON 03.04.2025

Guidelines adopted to protect environmental balance

3743. SHRI BABUBHAI JESANGBHAI DESAI:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of rules which have been implemented to maintain environmental balance due to the construction of hydropower projects;
- (b) the details of guidelines being followed to protect biodiversity and ecosystem in land selection for solar power plants; and
- (c) the status of Green Energy Certification for hydropower and solar power projects in the State?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) Hydro- Electric Projects with power generation capacity ≥ 25 MW require prior Environmental Clearance (EC) under the provisions of the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006, as amended, which, inter-alia, provides for four stages of consideration process i.e., Screening, Scoping, Public Consultation and Appraisal by the Expert Appraisal Committee. Whenever the Projects require prior Environmental Clearance, the Expert Appraisal Committee at the Central level or the State/UT level Expert Appraisal Committee and State/UT level Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) comprising domain area experts, after detailed examination and deliberations on various ecological and environmental aspects of the project including conservation and protection of biodiversity so as to maintain the sustainability of the ecosystem, recommend the project for grant of Environmental Clearance by suggesting suitable mitigation measures and Environmental Management to minimize the environmental and social impacts associated with the project.

Besides above, the hydro-electric projects, which are not covered under the provisions of the EIA Notification, 2006, as amended, are required to take Consent on regular basis from the concerned State Pollution Control Board / Pollution Control Committee under the provisions of the Air (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 and Water (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.

Projects involving forest land require Forest Clearance under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980. Whenever a proposal for diversion of forestland is

received, it is examined and due diligence is exercised to avoid the use of forest land, or to keep it to bare minimum. In cases where it is unavoidable, the forest area is allowed to be diverted, subject to certain conditions including the Compensatory Afforestation (CA) and payment of Net Present Value (NPV) wherever necessary. Additional mitigation measures in the form of Soil and Moisture Conservation works, Wildlife Management plan etc. are also stipulated on case-to-case basis.

Projects that involve the diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes inside wildlife sanctuaries and National Parks, including hydro-electric projects, need wildlife clearance under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. Further, those projects/activities listed in the Schedule of EIA notification 2006 and proposed to be located within Eco-sensitive Zone around wildlife sanctuaries or National Parks where notified or within 10 km where not finally notified require recommendations of the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wild Life.

(b) The provisions of the EIA Notification, 2006, as amended are not applicable to Solar Photo Voltaic power projects, Solar Thermal Power projects and development of Solar Parks. However, disposal of Photo Voltaic Cell attracts the provisions of the Hazardous and Other Waste (Management and Trans-Boundary Movement) Rules, 2016. Further, development of Solar Parks shall attract the provisions of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 and the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.

(c) According to the Central Electricity Authority (CEA), Ministry of Power, for incentivizing the environmental attribute of Renewable Energy (RE) generating plants, Renewable Energy Certification (REC) mechanism was introduced by Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) in 2010. This mechanism is a market based mechanism to help obligated entities meet their Renewable Consumption Obligations (RCO) and promote RE in India. Presently, REC mechanism is governed by Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (Terms and Conditions for Renewable Energy Certificates for Renewable Energy Generation) Regulations, 2022 which is in force from 05.12.2022.
