

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1350
TO BE ANSWERED ON 30.07.2026

Environmental clearances in protected areas

1350. SHRI L. K. SUDHISH:

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

- (a) whether the Ministry has recently reviewed the infrastructure projects proposed within or adjoining tiger reserves and other protected areas;
- (b) the criteria adopted by the Expert Appraisal Committee while considering such proposals;
- (c) the number of projects modified, deferred or rejected during the last two years;
- (d) the safeguards prescribed to minimise ecological damage; and
- (e) whether Government proposes to strengthen environmental appraisal procedures for ecologically sensitive landscapes?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (e): The Government of India has issued Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006 under the powers conferred by sub-section (1) and clause (v) of sub-section (2) of Section 3 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. As per the provisions laid down in the EIA Notification, 2006, as amended from time to time, the Projects/ Activities related to Physical Infrastructure including Environmental Services are specified under Item 7 of the Schedule to the EIA Notification, 2006, as amended. Such Projects/Activities are appraised by the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) at Central Level for Category 'A' projects and State Expert Appraisal Committee (SEAC) at the State/UT Level for Category 'B' projects, considering all the environmental implications associated with the project. In some cases, certain stretches of infrastructure projects may fall within or adjoining Tiger Reserves or other Protected Areas. Such proposals, once submitted online through the PARIVESH portal are examined on an ongoing basis by this Ministry. Such proposals (involving Tiger Reserves or other Protected Areas) have to undergo a stringent, multi-tier scrutiny and approval process, i.e. one before the EACs for grant of Environmental Clearance (EC) under the EIA Notification, 2006 and second through competent bodies and authorities for seeking Wildlife Clearance under the relevant provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 read with the Ministry's guidelines and the directions of the Hon'ble Courts.

For proper scrutiny and appraisal of projects the Ministry has, on the PARIVESH portal, also developed a Decision Support System (DSS), which is a GIS-enabled spatial visualization and analytical platform that integrates multiple geospatial datasets to assess the environmental sensitivity of project locations. It enables automated proximity analysis of projects with respect

to Protected Areas, Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZ), forests, wetlands, coastal regulation zones and other environmentally significant features, thereby providing evidence-based inputs to Expert Appraisal Committees (EACs) and regulatory authorities for informed and expeditious decision-making.

Proposals requiring Wildlife Clearance for projects located within Protected Areas or Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZs)/Eco-Sensitive Areas (ESAs) or Forest areas, as applicable, are scrutinised through a multi-tiered mechanism involving the State Chief Wild Life Warden, the State Board for Wild Life, and thereafter the cases so recommended, by the Ministry and the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife (SCNBWL), which examines the ecological sensitivity of the area, cumulative and specific impacts on wildlife habitats and corridors, and the proposed mitigation measures on a case-to-case basis. The proposals for Wildlife Clearance are recommended by SCNBWL only after due consideration of the impacts, mitigation measures and incorporating appropriate safeguards. Similarly, proposals are granted Environmental Clearance after due consideration of the environmental impacts and incorporation of project-specific environmental safeguards, including mitigation measures prescribed in the Environmental Management Plan (EMP). No construction or other project-related activities can be commenced by the Project Proponents unless prior Wildlife Clearance, as applicable, is obtained under the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

During the financial years 2024–25 and 2025–26, a total of 20 infrastructure projects/activities were granted EC following the aforementioned process where the project site is located, wholly or partly, in a Protected Area or Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ)/Eco-Sensitive Area (ESA), as applicable.

In accordance with the appraisal carried out by the Expert Appraisal Committee at the Centre/ State/ UT level, as applicable, project-specific environmental safeguards as part of the Environmental Clearance conditions to avoid, minimise and mitigate adverse environmental impacts are prescribed. These include measures relating to wildlife protection, habitat conservation, pollution control, compensatory plantation and environmental monitoring, as applicable. The scientific appraisal process and scrutiny at the approval stage ensures that adequate safeguards are incorporated for the protection of ecologically sensitive landscapes.
