

Notice for the Project Proponents/Consultants/ROPs in connection with the Regional EMP for mining of projects in Cluster Condition with area less than 5 Ha.

The Authority in its 148th meeting held on 27th and 28th September 2024, deliberated on the 'regional EMP for mining of projects in Cluster Condition with area less than 5Ha' and noticed that as per EIA Notification, 2006 a cluster shall be formed when 'the distance between the peripheries of one lease is less than 500 meters from the periphery of other leases in a homogeneous mineral area'. In the Order of the Hon“ble NGT dated 13.09.2018, it is stated that “considering the nature of occurrence of minor mineral, economic condition of the lessee and the likely difficulties to be faced by Regulatory Authorities in monitoring the environmental impacts and implementation of necessary mitigation measures, it may be desirable to adopt cluster approach in case of smaller mine leases being operated presently.”

The Authority noted that in many of the project sites, there are working and non-working quarries within a 500m radius, altogether the total area may be less than 5 Ha. For assessing the cluster situation, in addition to functional quarries, the Authority considers all those quarries that are not closed as per the approved Mine Closure Plan. If the cluster area is more than 5 Ha, the project proponent has to submit EIA report prepared by a NABET accredited agency and also has to conduct public hearing. As per the Order of the Hon'ble NGT dated 13.09.2018, and the Appendix XI of the EIA Notification, if the cluster area is less than 5 Ha, Regional EMP is required to be submitted with the EC application. Nevertheless, in majority of such cases, the project proponents submits an individual Environment Management Plan (EMP) with mitigation measures for their mining projects.

The Authority found that for the better management and implementation of the mitigation measures, the clusters having area less than 5 Ha, a Regional EMP considering all the projects within the cluster, prepared by a NABET accredited agency is essential. The Regional EMP shall include the comprehensive plan for drainage, traffic management, blasting time, greenbelt plan, the EMC for each project, etc. Therefore, **the project proponents of the**

mining project in the clusters below 5 Ha. have to submit the Regional EMP prepared by a NABET accredited agency along with the application. The decision shall be coming into force from 1st November 2024.