

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2456
ANSWERED ON:22.07.2009
SIMPLIFICATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE PROCESS
Joshi Shri Mahesh

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government proposes to simplify the procedure for granting environmental clearances to various projects in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether a large number of projects are lying pending with the Government for environmental clearance; and
- (d) if so, the extent to which simplification of procedure to give environmental clearances is likely to help in clearing the pending projects?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH)

(a) & (b) Ministry of Environment & Forests has proposed amendments in the Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006, vide S.O. 195(E) dated 19th January, 2009 for obtaining comments / suggestions from all concerned. The proposed amendments, some of which are clarificatory in nature and some seek to make the notification more comprehensive, inter-alia include: (i) enhancement of threshold limit for construction projects from 20,000 sq.m. to 50,000 sq.m., (ii) modernization and expansion projects without increase in pollution load to be exempt from the provision of EIA Notification, 2006, (iii) prospecting of minerals to be exempt from EIA Notification, 2006, (iv) biomass based power plants upto 50 MW to be exempt from EIA, (v) category 'B' projects to be exempt from scoping for three years, and (vi) proactive / voluntary disclosure of information relating to grant of environmental clearance for ensuring effective implementation and enforcement of environmental regulation through the creation of societal vigil.

(c) During the year 2008-09, 1612 projects received environmental clearance; as on 1.7.2009, 223 projects awaited environmental clearance from Ministry of Environment & Forests.

(d) To further reduce the pendency of projects received for environmental clearance in the Ministry of Environment & Forests, besides the proposed amendments in the EIA Notification, 2006 as mentioned in reply to part (a) & (b) of the Question above, Ministry of Environment & Forests has already made concerted efforts in this regard, which inter-alia include: (i) constitution of additional Expert Appraisal Committees (EACs), (ii) Rationalization of EACs for appraisal of integrated projects, (iii) Organization of longer duration meetings of EACs, (iv) putting the information relating to projects including agenda and minutes of the EAC meetings in public domain on the redesigned website of the Ministry.