EAC Thermal insists on hiring of EIA consultant by a PP before prescribing ToR

Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) for Thermal Power Projects (TPP) of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) considered 11 proposals in its 25th meeting on 22 February 2019. There are 5 proposals for amendment in EC, 1 for validity extension of EC, 1 for grant of EC and 4 for issuance of ToR.

Two important projects discussed and deferred are 3x800 MW Dhenkenal Super-Critical TPP and 1x800 MW Sipat Advance Ultra Super Critical Technology Demonstration Project.

Dhenkenal Super-Critical TPP - Deferred

The 3x800 MW Super-Critical Thermal Power Plant by Odisha Thermal Power Corporation Ltd at Dhenkenal, Odisha was considered for EC. The EAC noted that the project proponent and EIA consultant could not explain wildlife management plan and air quality modelling predictions for worst case scenario. Also, the project impact zone is part of Mahanadi Elephant Reserve and Maulabhanja-Jiridamali-Anantapur identified Elephant Corridor passes through the northern fringe of the impact zone. The Wildlife Management Plan mentions developing of greenbelt but it is not clear whether the greenbelt proposed is part of greenbelt in project area or separate area. Furthermore, the cloud cover in the meteorology data has not been considered and if cloud cover is not given as input to the AERMOD model, the stability classes will be varied and may not represent the real scenario. Hence, the EAC deferred the project for want of information on "map showing distance between elephant corridor, project boundary, the geographical extent of Schedule-I and II species in and around the project area, details of number of each species recorded in the impact zone, details of greenbelt proposed along with the map indicating the length, width and coordinates of the proposed greenbelt, details of air quality modelling, estimation of emission in worst case scenario and off set plan for cutting 13,264 trees in non-forest area and 2,829 trees in the forest area[1]".

[1] http://environmentclearance.nic.in/writereaddata/Form-1A/Minutes/11032019J5HJEYZ1Final25thMoMThermal22022019.pdf

Sipat Advance Ultra Super Critical Technology Demonstration Project -Deferred

The 1x800 MW Sipat Advance Ultra Super Critical Technology Demonstration Project (Stage-III) by NTPC Limited was considered for ToR. Project Proponent has not engaged an EIA consultant so far which is indentified as violation of Ministry's Office Memorandum dated 04.08.2009[2]. The proponent submitted that the EIA consultant will be engaged after obtaining ToR. It is because, if the ToR is not granted for a particular project, the financial contract with consultants may have to be cancelled and end up with loosing time and money. EAC noted that the Policy Section of IA Division of the Ministry has given a clarification that said OM cannot be relaxed for Public Sector companies and the compliance has to be uniformly followed by all the project proponents and thus deferred the proposal.

This is indeed paradoxical, for PP has a point in not hiring an EIA Consultant before the ToR is prescribed. The consultant hardly has much role before ToR is prescribed. A company like NTPC has capacity to prepare documents for EAC to consider for prescribe ToR.

Vindhyachal Super TPP - EAC recommends ash disposal in spite of identifying issues

4x500 MW (Stage-II & III) Vindhyachal Super TPP by NTPC Ltd. in Singrauli, Madhya Pradesh appeared for *disposal of ash in an abandoned mine void*. EAC on reviewing Google satellite imagery noted that the mine void of Gorbi mine is an acidic water body nearly filled to its brim (estimated quantity to be 14 million m^3) and is surrounded by thick green vegetation/forest. The ash disposal will displace huge quantity of water on which surrounding vegetation/forest is dependent. Further, the increase in water levels may weaken and destabilise the bund holding the water. The proposal falls in Singrauli Critically Polluted Area and the moratorium on developmental projects is still continuing, as the lifting of moratorium vide Ministry's' OM dated 10.04.2014 has been set aside by the NGT. Despite identifying all these issues, EAC permitted ash disposal in the mine voids.

Validity of EC for 350 MW Kamalanga TPP – EAC Recommends Extension

1x350 MW (Phase-II) Imported Coal based Power Project of Kamalanga Energy Limited at Dhenkenal, Odisha was considered for validity extension of EC which EAC granted for three years with additional conditions of submission of progress of construction activities and expenditure incurred to Regional Office, compliance to emission norms dated 07.12.2015 and revised tariff policy dated 28.01.2016.

[2] http://www.moef.nic.in/divisions/iass/ompp.pdf

Summary of other proposals

ToR Proposals

Project	Location	EAC decision
1x660 MW (Phase-III & Unit–5) Super critical Sagardighi TPP by WBPDC	Murshidabad, West Bengal	Recommended. However, EAC has noted that if the available land is used for proposed project, then achieving greenbelt in an area of 33% may not be possible. Presently, greenbelt is sparse in and around the plant area. Committee noticed that the ash is being disposed in lean slurry concentration system which consumes more fresh water from Bhagirathi river. Further, the installation of FGD System will also consume water. EAC has asked proponent to submit permission from NMCG to withdraw water from Bhagirathi.
55MW Waste to Energy facility by AGD Waste Processing Pvt. Ltd.	East Delhi Municipal Corporation, Delhi	Deferred. EAC noted that there is no clarity in the kind of plasma used in the proposed cold plasma gasification technique proposed, also the energy consumed in all processes involved in subsystems were not presented in detail. The mass and energy balance of the plant is not clearly available for evaluation. It only mentions the conversion of waste and wastewater into energy and purified water. But, it does not mention any process of how it is converted. Furthermore, the details provided such as input waste characteristics, process reactions, process by-products and plant output (55 MW power, water and fuel) are appearing superficial. It is suggested by EAC that demonstration of the technology/waste disposal plant in the lower/pilot scale is appreciable before the establishment of the proposed 200 TPD capacity. Hence, it deferred the project.

Amendment in EC Proposals

Project	Location	Amendment	EAC decision
2x660 MW (Stage-II) Coal based Tanda STPP by NTPC Ltd	Ambedkar Nagar, Uttar Pradesh	Specific conditions related to installation of FGD, stack height and ESP	Recommended. EAC noted that the condition regarding online monitoring of PM2.5 & PM10 in the stack emissions may have been stipulated erroneously, as there are instruments available. The condition "High Efficiency Electrostatic Precipitators (ESPs) shall be installed to ensure that particulate emission does not exceed 50 mg/Nm3 is changed to "**ensure meeting of latest emission norms**". It also imposed additional conditions of compliance to new emission norms and water requirements as per notification dated 07.12.2015 and installation of FGD and SCR/SNCR to achieve it, and compliance to revised tariff policy 28.01.2016.
1x800 MW (Stage-V) Dr.	Krishna, Andhra	Changing the coal source	Recommended. EAC noted that the change in coal source will

Narla Tata Rao TPS by APGENCO	Pradesh	from imported coal to domestic coal	increase the ash generation and the ash pond area of 70 acres permitted under EC will not be used as the existing ash pond of 425 ha will be used which has been almost filled with nearly 40 Million Tonnes of ash. Considering this, the utilisation mechanism needs to be prepared. EAC directed that the details of ash generation, utilization and disposal should be provided in compliance report, 70 acres of ash pond which was permitted as part of EC will not be used for ash disposal and greenbelt shall be developed on this 70 acres area.
2x660 MW Super critical coal based TPP by Welspun Energy Ltd.	Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh	Rectifying the defects and deficiencies pointed out in the judgment	Recommended. With additional conditions of assurance from UP Jal Nigam for supplying treated Sewage Water of 257.8 MLD to the proposed project as only treated sewage water shall be used during operations. Final layout of the pipelines starting from STPs to the power project shall be submitted. Further, no fresh water from Ganga River shall be drawn for the proposed project (both construction and operation phase). RO treatment plant to be installed at BHU and time bound action plan for implementation shall be submitted within three months and Before drawing the groundwater during construction phase (500 KLD), permission from CGWB shall be obtained.
5x270 MW Coal based TPP by RattanIndia Nasik Power Ltd	Nasik, Maharash tra	Temporary transportation by road	Recommended till March 2020 This is subject to continuous usage of 3 water sprinklers on 3 routes, avenue plantation with Social Forestry Department, restriction of speed limit to 25 km/hr on internal roads, deploying only BS III/IV/VI vehicles and ambient air quality monitoring at 5 locations.
Expansion of MSW based Waste to Energy plant from 16 MW to 23 MW by Timarpur Okhla Waste Management Company Private Ltd	Okhla, New Delhi	Enhancing the power generation capacity without increasing the waste feed to the boiler	Recommended. EAC noted there is no increase in MSW loading into the boiler, only calorific value in the waste has increased which will result in higher power generation. Additional conditions of online emission monitoring, and inclusion of information of daily waste quantities and monitoring reports submission in compliance reports is imposed.

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