

**Government of India
Ministry of Mines
National Mineral Exploration Trust**

F. No. 6/3/2015-NMET/ 380


New Delhi, 12th December, 2023

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject: Scheme for engagement of Notified Private Exploration Agencies in Mineral Exploration of Critical and Strategic Minerals - reg.

In partial modification to the OM F.No.6/3/2015-NMET/28 dt. 10th May, 2022 the Competent Authority has approved the modified scheme for engagement of Notified Private Exploration Agencies (NPEA) by Central Government in exploration of minerals notified under Part D of the First Schedule and Seventh Schedule of the MMDR Act, 1957. The details of scheme are attached for information and necessary action.

Encl: As above


(Vivek Kumar Sharma)
Director, NMET

To

1. The Secretary (Mines), Government of Andhra Pradesh.
2. The Secretary (Geology & Mining), Government of Arunachal Pradesh.
3. The Principal Secretary, Department of Mines & Minerals, Government of Assam.
4. The Principal Secretary-cum-Mines Commissioner, Government of Bihar.
5. The Secretary, Mineral Resource Department, Government of Chhattisgarh.
6. The Principal Secretary, Department of Mines & Geology, Government of Goa.
7. The Addl. Chief Secretary (Industries), Government of Himachal Pradesh.
8. The Principal Secretary (Industry & Mines), Government of Gujarat.
9. The Commissioner Secretary (Industries & Commerce), Government of Jammu & Kashmir.
10. The Secretary (Industries, Mines & Geology), Government of Jharkhand.
11. The Secretary, (Industries & Commerce) Government of Karnataka.
12. The Principal Secretary, Industries Department, Government of Kerala.

13. The Secretary (Mines), Government of Madhya Pradesh.
14. The Addl. Chief Secretary (Industries & Mines), Government of Maharashtra.
15. The Commissioner and Secretary, Mining & Geology Department, Government of Meghalaya.
16. The Commissioner & Secretary, Geology & Mining, Government of Nagaland.
17. The Principal Secretary (Steel & Mines), Government of Odisha.
18. The Principal Secretary, Mines & Geology, Government of Punjab.
19. The Principal Secretary (Mines), Government of Rajasthan.
20. The Principal Secretary (Industries), Government of Tamil Nadu.
21. The Principal Secretary (Industries & Mines), Government of Telangana.
22. The Secretary (Mines & Geology), Government of Uttar Pradesh.
23. The Principal Secretary (Mines), Government of Uttarakhand.
24. The Secretary (Industry, Commerce & Enterprises), Government of West Bengal.
25. The Secretary, Department of Industries, Administration of Union Territory of Ladakh.
26. The Principal Secretary, Mines and Geology Department, Government of Sikkim.

Copy to:

1. The Director, Department of Mines and Geology, Government of Andhra Pradesh.
2. Director, Directorate of Geology & Mining, Govt. of Assam.
3. Director, Department of Mines & Geology, Govt. of Bihar.
4. The Director, Directorate of Geology & Mining, Govt. of Chhattisgarh.
5. The Director of Mines & Geology, Government of Goa.
6. Commissioner of Geology and Mining, Govt. of Gujarat.
7. The Director, Department of Industries, Govt. of Himachal Pradesh.
8. The Director, Department of Geology and Mining, Government of Jammu and Kashmir.
9. The Director (Mines), Directorate of Mines, Government of Jharkhand.
10. The Director, Department of Mines & Geology, Government of Karnataka.
11. The Director, Directorate of Mining & Geology, Government of Kerala.
12. The Director, Directorate of Geology & Mining, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh.
13. The Director, Directorate of Geology and Mining, Government of Maharashtra.
14. The Director, Directorate of Mineral Resources, Government of Meghalaya.
15. The Director, Directorate of Mines, Government of Odisha.

16. The Director, Mines and Geology Directorate, Government of Rajasthan.
17. The Commissioner of Geology & Mining, Government of Tamil Nadu.
18. The Director of Mines and Geology, Government of Telangana.
19. The Director, Directorate of Geology & Mining, Government of Uttar Pradesh.
20. The Director, Geology and Mining Unit, Govt. of Uttarakhand.
21. The Director, Directorate of Mines & Minerals, Government of West Bengal.
22. The Director, Natural Resources Division-Tata Steel Limited, East Singhbhum, Jharkhand -831001.
23. The Managing Director, Indian Mine Planners E.M, Kolkata, West Bengal- 700107.
24. The Director, United Exploration India Pvt. Ltd. New Town, West Bengal 700156.
25. The CEO & Director, Gemcokati Exploration Pvt Ltd, E 77 MIDC Chandrapur, Maharashtra – 442401.
26. The Managing Director, Geotechnical Mining Solutions, Dharmapuri, Tamil Nadu-636705.
27. The Director, Geoexpore Private Limited, No 12-28/2 SY No.28/2 Kothanur Arya Grande Hamsa Bangalore, Karnataka – 560078.
28. The Chairman, V.M. Salgaocar and Brother Private Limited, FI Gomes Rd, Vasco da Gama, Gao 403802.
29. The CEO & Director (Consulting), Geology & Hydro Services, Geovale Services Pvt. Ltd., 3rd Floor, Anaya Chambers, GN 38/5, Sector V, Salt Lake, Kolkata – 700091.
30. The Managing Director, Maheshwari Mining Pvt. Ltd., FR 07 Shilpangan, Plot No- LB 1, Sector III, Salt Lake, Kolkata – 700091
31. The Director, Geo Marine Solution Pvt. Ltd., Sankaigudda, Bejai, Mangalore- 575004.
32. The Director, Geo Exploration and Mining Solutions, No: 17, Advaita Ashram Rd, Fairlands, Salem, Tamil Nadu 636004.
33. The Chairman, Ecomen Laboratories Pvt. Ltd., Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh 226024.
34. The Director, Infrastructure Logistics Private Limited, St Inez, Panaji North Goa GA 403001.
35. The Managing Director, Novomine India Private Limited, Meghalaya Pohkse, Shillong – 793006.
36. The Managing Manager, Engeotech Consultant, 1338, Kachnar City Rd, Vijay Nagar, Jabalpur, Raksha, Madhya Pradesh 482002.
37. The Chairman, Kartikay Exploration & Mining Services Pvt. Ltd., Crorepati Lane, Civil Line Nagpur, Maharashtra 440001.

Copy for information to:

1. PSO to Secretary, Ministry of Mines, Shashtri Bhawan, New Delhi-110 001
2. PPS to AS, Ministry of Mines, Shashtri Bhawan, New Delhi-110 001
3. Director (Technical), Shashtri Bhawan, New Delhi-110 001

Scheme for engagement of Notified Private Exploration Agencies in Mineral Exploration directly through National Mineral Exploration Trust

1. Background

1.1 Central Government has made several policy reforms to boost the mineral production in the country and make the country self-reliant in mineral sector. Recent amendment in the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act) in 2023 has empowered Central Government to exclusively auction Composite Licence and Mining Lease for critical and strategic minerals listed in the Part D of the first Schedule of the Act. Further, a new provision for grant of exploration license has been made for mineral specified in the Seventh Schedule of the MMDR Act, 1957 to encourage participation of private sector in exploration of these minerals considering their importance in national economy and need of use of the latest technology in exploration in these minerals.

1.2 In view of the amendments, it will be appropriate that the exploration of these minerals as specified in the Part D of the First Schedule and in the Seventh Schedule of the MMDR Act, 1957 through National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET) funds is handled by Central Government. The projects proposals submitted by Notified Private Exploration Agencies (NPEAs) in this category of minerals may directly be handled by NMET for approval and sanction.

2. Objective

2.1 The objective of the Scheme is to boost the exploration activities in the country by engaging NPEA in mineral exploration of critical and strategic minerals as listed in the Part D of the First Schedule and Seventh Schedule of the MMDR Act, 1957 by the Central Government and to ease out the process of reimbursement/ funding of the operations by NPEA through NMET.

3. Procedure for Engagement of Notified Private Exploration Agencies by Central Government and their Funding

3.1 General Conditions

- (i) The present scheme is applicable for exploration of minerals as mentioned in Part-D of the First Schedule (**Annexure 1**) and Seventh Schedule (**Annexure 2**) of the MMDR Act 1957.

(ii) Exploration operations shall be undertaken in accordance with the provisions regarding such operations in the Minerals (Evidence of Mineral Contents) Rules) 2015, the Mineral Conservation and Development Rules, 2017 (MCDR), the Guidelines for notification of accredited private exploration agencies issued by Ministry of Mines on 12th August, 2021 and any other applicable law for the time being in force.

(iii) NPEA shall undertake exploration in respect of the category of minerals and mineral deposits under which it has been notified.

(iv) Approval for exploration to NPEA or their funding from NMET shall not confer any right on the NPEA for grant of any mineral concession in the area explored. The mineral concession (composite licence, mining lease, etc.) in such explored area shall be granted in accordance with the provision of the MMDR Act and rules made thereunder. A NPEA may participate in auction of mineral concession over the block or a part thereof which has been explored by such NPEA subject to provision of the MMDR Act and rules made thereunder.

(v) In case of exploration projects of minerals as mentioned in Part-D of First Schedule and Seventh Schedule of the MMDR amendment Act 2023, already sanctioned by NMET in the name of State Government to be executed by NPEA also, the NPEA will be eligible to participate in auction of these blocks.

(vi) The details of any related party to the NPEA, participating in the auction for mining lease has to be declared beforehand to the Central Government/ State Government.

3.2 Mode of Engagement of Notified Private Exploration Agencies (NPEA) and Funding by NMET for Exploration of Critical and Strategic Minerals

The engagement of NPEA by Central Government and the funding of exploration projects will be done as per the following details:

- i. NPEA may select the area for exploration based on available geoscience data and submit a proposal in respect of the same to NMET. The geoscience data may be accessed from Geological Survey of India's baseline geoscience database available free of cost in the NGDR/Bhukosh portal of Geological Survey of India (GSI), database of other government or private agencies, etc.

- ii. NPEA may submit an application outlining the details of the area, mineral commodities, etc., it proposes for undertaking exploration to NMET in the format specified in Schedule to this Scheme.
- iii. Upon receipt of such application from NPEA, NMET shall send the proposal to Geological Survey of India (GSI) and State Government (DGM/DMG) for their comments for submitting report on the feasibility for undertaking the item for the identified commodity within one month of the receipt of the application from NMET.
- iv. Upon receipt of comments from GSI and State Government (DGM/DMG), NMET shall grant the in-principle approval to NPEA or reject the proposal within 15 days of the receipt of comments from GSI and State Government.
- v. Upon grant of in-principle approval, the NPEA shall prepare and submit the detailed exploration proposal to NMET for evaluation for reconnaissance or prospecting surveys in the format prescribed (**Annexure 3**).
- vi. The proposals submitted to NMET shall be evaluated and approved as per the prescribed procedure of NMET and the concerned NPEA will be responsible for defending the proposal before the Technical and Cost Committee (TCC) of NMET. Further, on recommendation of TCC the projects will be reviewed by Executive Committee (EC) of NMET for approval and sanction.
- vii. On approval of EC, NMET shall issue the sanction order to NPEA and funds will be released by NMET to NPEA as per norms.
- viii. As per Rule 172 (1) Para (ii) of GFR 2017, in case the NPEA wishes to avail mobilization advance (up to 30% of the approved project cost), the NPEA has to submit a Bank Guarantee (BG, including e-bank guarantee) of equal value of advance to NMET. Advance paid will be adjusted in the first bill submitted by the NPEA and a Utilization Certificate of the same has to be submitted along with the bills. Further payment will be made on reimbursement basis against the bills submitted by NPEA. The BG should remain valid for a period of 60 days beyond the date of completion of project and acceptance of geological report by NMET. The Bank Guarantee will be released within 30 days after the settlement of mobilization advance.
- ix. The Deputy Director General, GSI will be the Nodal Officer from the respective State Unit Office of GSI who will examine/monitor the work executed by the NPEA in the State and verify the bills claimed by NPEA for such purpose. The NPEA will submit bill to NMET after verification/certification of the Nodal Officer.
- x. The NPEA undertaking exploration shall submit the yearly geological report(s) and final geological report(s) of the exploration projects to NMET, State Government and Regional Controller or the authorized officer of Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM) in accordance with rule 9 of MCDR, 2017. In case of projects with a timeline of more than one year, an interim report will be submitted by NPEA.
- xi. The raw data generated by NPEA during the prospecting operation shall be submitted to State Government, Geological Survey of India (GSI) and Regional Controller or the authorized officer of Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM). Core logs generated by NPEA have to be submitted to the nearest Regional Core Library of GSI as per the SOP of GSI for this purpose in respect of the block.
- xii. The Central Government shall technically evaluate the geological report and decide about the potential mineral blocks which can further be taken up for auction. The Central Government or State Government, as the case may be, shall put the block for auction as per the procedure prescribed in the Mineral (Auction) Rules 2015 for grant of composite licence or mining lease, as the case may be. The Central Government shall mention the name of NPEA who has prepared the Geological Report in the tender document.

MMDR amendment Act 2023
"PART D of the First Schedule"
Critical and Strategic Minerals

1. Beryl and other beryllium bearing minerals.
2. Cadmium bearing minerals.
3. Cobalt bearing minerals.
4. Gallium bearing minerals.
5. Glauconite.
6. Graphite.
7. Indium bearing minerals.
8. Lithium bearing minerals.
9. Molybdenum bearing minerals.
10. Nickel bearing minerals.
11. Niobium bearing minerals.
12. Phosphate (without uranium).
13. Platinum group of elements bearing minerals.
14. Potash.
15. Minerals of the "rare earths" group not containing Uranium and Thorium.
16. Rhenium bearing minerals.
17. Selenium bearing minerals.
18. Tantalum bearing minerals.
19. Tellurium bearing minerals.
20. Tin bearing minerals.
21. Titanium bearing minerals and ores (ilmenite, rutile and leucoxene).
22. Tungsten bearing minerals.
23. Vanadium bearing minerals.
24. Zirconium bearing minerals and ores including zircon.

MMDR amendment Act 2023

"The Seventh Schedule"

Minerals

1. Apatite
2. Beryl and other beryllium bearing minerals
3. Cadmium bearing minerals
4. Cobalt bearing minerals
5. Copper bearing minerals
6. Diamond
7. Gold
8. Graphite
9. Indium bearing minerals
10. Lead bearing minerals
11. Lithium bearing minerals
12. Molybdenum bearing minerals
13. Niobium bearing minerals
14. Nickel bearing minerals
15. Potash
16. Platinum group of elements bearing minerals
17. Minerals of 'rare earths' group
18. Rhenium bearing minerals
19. Rock Phosphate
20. Selenium
21. Silver
22. Tantalum bearing minerals
23. Tellurium bearing minerals
24. Tin bearing minerals
25. Titanium bearing minerals and ores (ilmenite, rutile and leucoxene)
26. Tungsten bearing minerals
27. Vanadium bearing minerals
28. Zinc bearing minerals
29. Zirconium bearing minerals and ores including zircon

FORMAT FOR SUBMITTING PROPOSAL FOR UNDERTAKING EXPLORATION

To,
The Director & HoD,
National Mineral Exploration Trust,
Ministry of Mines
New Delhi - 110001

Madam/Sir,

I/we am/are submitting the following details for granting 'in-principle' approval by NMET for proposal on reconnaissance or prospecting surveys under the scheme of Engagement of Notified Private Exploration Agencies in Exploration of Critical and Strategic Minerals issued by Ministry of Mines vide order No. ____ dt ____.

1. Name and Address of the Applicant

(a)	Name:	
(b)	Postal address:	
(c)	Telephone Number (Office):	
(d)	Fax number (Office):	
(e)	Mobile No:	
(f)	Telephone Number (Residence):	
(g)	E-mail address:	

2. Details of Accreditation as Private Exploration Agency and Notification under the proviso to Section 4(1) of the MMRD Act

(a)	Date of accreditation granted by QCI-NABET:	
(b)	Date of expiry of accreditation:	
(c)	Date of Notification under the proviso to Section 4(1) of the MMRD Act:	
(d)	Date of expiry of Notification:	
(e)	Category of the exploration Agency (Category A or B) under Notification:	

3. Location Details of the Area Proposed

(a)	State	
(b)	District (s)	
(c)	Nearby Village (s)	
(d)	Survey of India (SOI) Toposheet (s) No.	
(e)	Area in sq. km.	
(f)	Boundary coordinates of the proposed block (in Decimal degree)	

4. Mineral Potential of the Area

(a)	Name of Mineral(s) identified/ expected in the area/ block	
(b)	Basis on which mineral potential in the area has been identified	
(c)	List of documents and references relied upon in support of item (b) above	

5. Documents to be enclosed with the application

- (i) Location of the proposed block demarcated on Survey of India (SOI) Toposheet No.
- (ii) Documents mentioned in item 4(c) above.

Place:

Date:

Signature of Applicant