

Draft Environment Impact Assessment Notification

June 26, 2020

The draft Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) notification 2020 proposes to **ease processes for business, does away with the public hearings for many projects, ease rules for expansion of projects among other things.**

Draft EIA Notification

The draft is a review of the 2006 EIA notification and the new regulations are being brought after 14 years.

Features of the notification:

- The **waterway projects** have been included in the EIA's B2 category and **will not require prior environmental clearance.**
- It gives permission for industries to submit just **one compliance report a year rather than two.**
- One of the fundamental issues is that **projects with violations**, especially construction, can now receive **post facto clearance.** It undermines the orders of the National Green Tribunal which had ruled against post-facto approvals.
- The draft proposes to **expand the list of projects that do not need to seek public consultation** before they seek environment clearance. Public consultation is exempted for projects including modernisation of irrigation projects, all building, construction and area development projects, inland waterways, expansion or widening of national highways, all projects concerning national defence and security or involving other strategic considerations as determined by the central government, all linear projects like pipelines in border areas and all the off-shore projects located beyond the

12 nautical miles.

- A mining project can now get **environmental clearance for a period of up to 50 years**, in the beginning itself which in the 2006 version was up to 30 years only.
- The **time period** under the earlier notification for the **conducting of the public hearing** was 45 days. Under the new draft notification, this time period has been **reduced to 40 days**.
- Environmentalists and researchers who analysed the draft, point out that it legitimises violations by those who start projects without environment clearance, weakens the public consultation process and gives a lot of discretionary powers to authorities.