

File No.:FC-11/49/2026-FC
Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
(Forest Conservation Division)

Indira Parayavaran Bhawan
Jor Bagh Road,
New Delhi-110003
Dated: As per E-sign

To

The Additional Chief Secretary (Forests) / Principal Secretary (Forests),
All State Governments/Union Territory Administrations

Subject: Rationalisation of Essential Details Sought (EDS) workflow in the Forest Clearance (FC) Module on PARIVESH - reg.

Madam / Sir,

In suppression to this Ministry's letter of even number dated 16.03.2026, I am directed to refer to the subject cited above and to inform that, with a view to streamlining the processing of proposals seeking forest clearance, the Ministry has undertaken a comprehensive review of the information being sought through the Essential Details Sought (EDS) workflow under the Forest Clearance (FC) module of the PARIVESH portal.

2. It has been observed that, on several occasions, multiple and ambiguous EDS are being raised by different processing authorities, resulting in avoidable delays in the processing forest clearance proposals. Accordingly, the EDS workflow in the FC module has been rationalized to ensure comprehensive scrutiny at each stage and to eliminate repetitive or piecemeal queries. Further, the online application forms have also been refined to capture complete and structured information at the proposal submission stage itself, thereby minimizing the need for seeking any other essential details through multiple queries.

3. The salient features of the rationalized EDS workflow in the PARIVESH portal are as under:

- i. Only a single, comprehensive EDS may be raised by a processing authority in the State/UT at any given stage of scrutiny i.e. at the level of Divisional Forest Officer, Project Screening Committee and Nodal Officer of the State/UTs. The concerned officer raising EDS shall also mention the information to be provided for fulfilling the requirements of EDS.
- ii. Replies furnished by User Agencies and responding authorities shall be complete, clear, and self-contained, leaving no scope for further EDS at the same level.
- iii. In cases where responses are found to be incomplete by the officer raising the EDS, any further observations or queries of the concerned authority shall be escalated to the next higher authority by the officer raising the EDS, instead of issuing a fresh EDS. However, the officer raising the EDS may note down his observations/note before sending the file to the next higher

- authority.
- iv. EDS raised at any level shall be visible to User Agencies as well as to the subordinate authorities, to ensure transparency, accountability and consistency in decision-making.
 - v. Where, despite the clarity in raising EDS following the procedure as outlined above, the replies to EDS are found to be incomplete, inadequate, or unsatisfactory, the concerned authorities i.e. the Nodal Officer and the State Government, **may delist the proposal for reasons to be recorded** by such officers in the PARIVESH portal.
 - vi. The User Agency may, after fully rectifying the identified deficiencies, submit a request for relisting of the proposal along with complete supporting documentation.
4. The revised EDS workflow has been deployed on the PARIVESH portal. A detailed Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) outlining the revised EDS process flow is enclosed herewith for guidance and strict compliance.
5. All State Governments and Union Territory Administrations are requested to sensitise the concerned Nodal Officers, Conservators of Forests, Divisional Forest Officers, and other processing authorities regarding the revised EDS workflow and to ensure its strict adherence while processing proposals under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980.
6. This issues with the approval of the Competent Authority.

Encl.: As above.

Yours faithfully,

(Charan Jeet Singh)
Scientist 'E'

Copy to:

1. The PCCF & HoFF, all State Governments and Union Territory Administrations
2. The Deputy Director General of Forests (Central), all Regional Offices of MoEF&CC
3. The Nodal Officers dealing with matters connected with the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980, all State Governments and Union Territory Administrations
4. Director, NIC, MoEF&CC, with a request to organise an online demonstration of the revised module for processing authorities in the States/UTs

Copy for internal circulation to:

PSO to Secretary, EF&CC/PSO to DGF&SS/Senior PPS to Additional DGF (FC)

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for raising of EDS (Essential Details Sought) by the processing authorities while processing the Forest Clearance proposals

1. Background

The PARIVESH portal is an integrated end-to-end online platform for submission, scrutiny, and processing of proposals seeking prior approval of the Central Government under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980. It ensures transparency, traceability, and time-bound disposal of proposals in accordance with the statutory framework, while maintaining a digital audit trail to strengthen accountability and institutional efficiency.

The portal includes an in-built Essential Details Sought (EDS) module, enabling authorities at the State, Regional Office, and Ministry levels to seek necessary clarifications and additional information to ensure completeness and legal adequacy of proposals.

However, past experience indicates that multiple and ambiguous EDS at different stages have led to duplication of queries, repeated scrutiny, delays, and avoidable procedural back-and-forth, thereby affecting adherence to timelines and accountability.

Accordingly, a structural reform and rationalisation of the EDS mechanism, along with optimisation of the online submission format, has been undertaken to streamline scrutiny, eliminate redundancy, strengthen accountability, and enhance transparency and efficiency in the forest clearance process.

2. Redefining the EDS Framework

2.1 Systemic Review and Analysis:

An analysis of the types and categories of EDS raised at various levels (DFO, State, Regional Office and Ministry), particularly in respect of proposals involving forest land areas between 5 ha and 40 ha, has revealed that ambiguously framed EDS have frequently resulted in multiple and repetitive queries, as well as instances of breach of prescribed timelines.

In view of the above, processing authorities shall ensure that EDS are framed in a clear, precise and comprehensive manner, capturing all deficiencies in a single consolidated communication, so as to enable User Agencies to furnish complete and structured replies and avoid repetitive scrutiny.

2.2 Refinement of Online Applications:

In order to ensure that the online application captures complete and comprehensive information and documentation relating to the proposal, the Ministry has revamped and refined the application format in PARIVESH. The revised application form mandates the User Agency to furnish clear, accurate and complete information at the time of submission, and requires processing authorities to record detailed observations and inputs in their respective sections.

All concerned stakeholders shall ensure that the refined fields in the application form are filled carefully and comprehensively. Proper and complete submission at the initial stage is essential to minimise the scope for

subsequent EDS and to facilitate streamlined, time-bound processing of proposals.

3. Optimised EDS Process Flow

3.1 Single Comprehensive EDS:

The application forms in PARIVESH have been comprehensively revamped to capture holistic and complete information relating to the proposal. Accordingly, the User Agency shall ensure that all requisite information, supporting documents and statutory particulars are furnished accurately and in full at the time of online submission.

In view of the strengthened application framework designed to capture comprehensive details at the initial stage of proposal submission, each processing authority shall be permitted to raise only one consolidated EDS during the processing cycle of a proposal. Accordingly, authorities must undertake thorough and holistic scrutiny prior to raising EDS and shall strictly avoid piecemeal, fragmented or sequential queries.

Any EDS raised must be clear, precise and comprehensive, explicitly specifying the nature of the deficiencies observed and the exact information, clarification or documents required from the replying agency or authority. Vague or open-ended queries shall be avoided to ensure effective and time-bound compliance.

3.2 Submission of complete replies to the EDS:

User Agencies as well as processing authorities shall ensure that replies furnished against EDS are complete, structured and strictly point-wise, satisfactorily addressing each observation raised. Every response shall be supported by relevant documents, or other evidence, wherever required, so as to fully rectify the identified deficiencies.

Replies shall be clear, precise and self-contained, comprehensively addressing each point raised, so as to leave no scope for ambiguity or the need for further clarification by the EDS-raising authority. Incomplete, evasive or unsupported submissions undermine the objective of the streamlined EDS framework and may necessitate escalation or other action in accordance with the prescribed procedure, thereby resulting in avoidable delays in the approval process.

3.3 Incomplete replies of EDS – Escalation to next level instead of Fresh EDS:

In cases where complete information is not furnished in response to an EDS, the processing authority shall not raise a fresh EDS at the same level. Instead, the unreplied or inadequately addressed portions, along with the authority's recorded observations, shall be escalated to the next higher authority for appropriate consideration.

The State Secretary can raise Multiple EDS to the Nodal Officer, which can be forwarded in the hierarchy channel to the User Agency or DFO.

The User Agency shall be duly informed online of such deficiencies and shall be provided the opportunity to submit the requisite information directly to the higher authority. This mechanism is intended to prevent repetitive EDS cycles,

ensure procedural discipline, and avoid unnecessary delays in the approval process.

3.4 Visibility and Transparency:

All EDS raised at any level shall be visible to the User Agency as well as to all subordinate authorities in the processing hierarchy. Such transparency will enhance procedural efficiency by enabling the User Agency to prepare comprehensive replies in advance and submit responses promptly once the proposal is formally routed to it. This measure is intended to minimize processing delays, prevent duplication of queries, and ensure smoother workflow across all levels.

3.5 Alert and Notification Mechanism:

NIC shall strengthen the automated system of alerts and periodic reminders within the PARIVESH portal to prevent breach of prescribed timelines and to ensure timely examination and disposal of proposals at every level of processing. Such proactive notification mechanisms shall reinforce accountability, reduce pendency, and promote time-bound decision-making in accordance with the statutory framework.

3.6 Delisting and Relisting Mechanism

In cases where authorities, including the Nodal Officer, State Government, receive replies to EDS that are incomplete, inadequate or unsatisfactory, the authorities may delist the proposal with duly recorded reasons in the system. Delisting shall serve as a corrective regulatory measure to enforce procedural discipline and ensure submission of complete and legally sustainable proposals.

The User Agency may, after fully rectifying the identified deficiencies, submit a request for relisting of the proposal along with complete supporting documentation. Upon relisting, the proposal shall be treated as fresh at the concerned level of processing, and the EDS permissions shall reset in accordance with the prescribed system workflow.

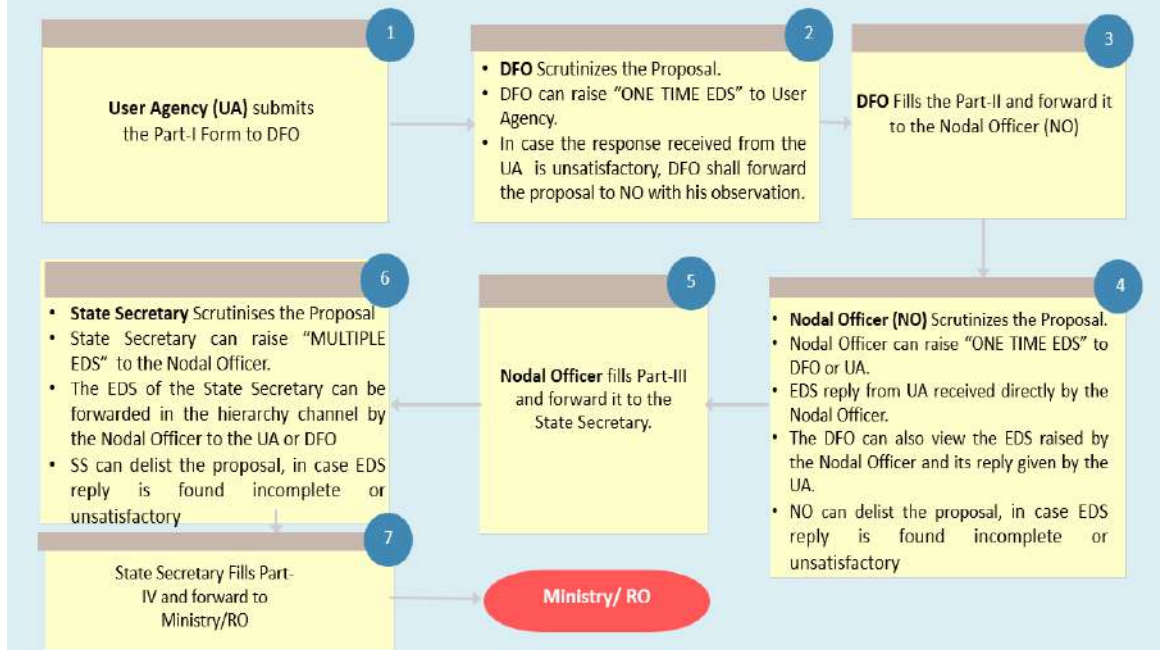
4. Expected Outcomes

The redefined EDS framework is set to significantly streamline the Forest Clearance process by reducing processing time and improving the quality of submissions. By eliminating redundant EDS cycles, it strengthens accountability, ensures strict adherence to statutory timelines, and fosters greater transparency in decision-making.

5. All User Agencies and authorities shall strictly adhere to this SOP to ensure efficient, transparent and time-bound implementation of the Forest Clearance regime.

6. Schematic Representation of the Single EDS Process Flow

Forest Clearance : New EDS Process for "Less than 5 Ha"



Forest Clearance : New EDS Process for "More than 5 Ha"

