

Ministry of Coal Introduces Simplified Approval Mechanism for “Exploration Programs and Geological Reports” to Boost Efficient and Sustainable Coal Exploration

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India’s rising energy requirements demand faster, more efficient, and technologically robust exploration of coal and lignite resources. In line with this national imperative, the Ministry of Coal continues to introduce progressive reforms that enhance transparency, strengthen private sector participation, and reinforce the nation’s energy preparedness. This initiative further demonstrates the Government’s commitment to modernising processes and strengthening the exploration ecosystem for Bharat.

The Ministry of Coal has reviewed the earlier methodology and simplified the mechanism for approval of exploration programs and Geological Reports (GRs) for coal and lignite blocks prepared by Notified Accredited Prospecting Agencies (APAs) accredited by QCI-NABET and peer-reviewed by another such APA. The new process does not require the approval of Committee constituted by Ministry of Coal in January 2022 for this purpose. This marks a major procedural reform and a significant step towards enhancing ease of doing business in the exploration sector. The new methodology published by Ministry of Coal is available on its website at <https://www.coal.nic.in/sites/default/files/2025-12/01-12-2025a-wn.pdf>

In the recent reform by expanding and utilising the capabilities of Private Accredited Prospecting Agencies, the Government has demonstrated strong confidence in private exploration entities. This approach seeks to harness their efficiency, technological expertise, and innovation for the sustainable development of India’s coal resources, while ensuring strict transparency and adherence to high technical standards. There will be saving of at least 3 months in the approval process of the Geological Report resulting in early operationalisation of the block and facilitate the coal block allottees in timely completion of the milestones. The reform is expected to accelerate exploration, reduce approval timelines, and contribute to the long-term security and sustainable utilisation of India’s coal resources.

With such forward-looking reforms, the Ministry of Coal continues to fortify India’s path towards greater energy security and a self-reliant Bharat. By strengthening exploration capabilities and enhancing private sector participation, the Ministry is helping lay the foundation for a robust coal ecosystem that will power the aspirations of a Viksit Bharat in the years ahead and build a stronger, future-ready energy landscape for the Nation.

Shuhaib T

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