

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

F. No. 6/3/2015-NMET/ 397

New Delhi, 10th July, 2026

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject: Guidelines for Partial Reimbursement of Offshore Mineral Exploration Expenses for Holders of Composite License (CL) granted through auction -reg.

With a view to encourage and accelerate the discovery and delineation of offshore mineral resources within the country, Guidelines have been formulated to provide the framework for partial reimbursement of eligible exploration expenditure incurred by the holders of Composite Licences (CL) for offshore blocks granted through auction. The Guidelines have been approved by Hon'ble Union Minister of Mines.

The Guidelines including the objectives, eligibility criteria, conditions, procedure for submission of proposal, scale for reimbursement of exploration expenses etc. are attached.

Digitally signed by
Geetika Sharma
Date: 10-07-2026 19:07:54

(Geetika Sharma)
Director

To

1. The Secretary (Mines), Government of Andhra Pradesh.
2. The Secretary (Geology and Mining), Government of Arunachal Pradesh.
3. The Principal Secretary, Department of Mines and 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 and Geology, Government of Goa.
7. The Principal Secretary (Industry and Mines), Government of Gujarat.
8. The Addl. Chief Secretary (Industries), Government of Himachal Pradesh.
9. The Principal Secretary, Department of Mines and Geology, Government of Haryana
10. The Commissioner Secretary (Industries and Commerce), Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.
11. The Secretary (Industries, Mines and Geology), Government of Jharkhand.
12. The Secretary, (Industries and Commerce), Government of Karnataka.
13. The Principal Secretary, Industries Department, Government of Kerala.

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

Copy to

1. The ADG, PSS GSI, CHQ, 27 JLN Road, Kolkata-700016.
2. The General Manager (Exploration), Mineral Exploration and Consultancy Limited (MECL), Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Bhawan, Seminary Hills, Nagpur
3. Central Mine Planning & Design Institute Limited Kanke Rd, CMPDI Complex, Gondwana Place, Ranchi, Jharkhand 834008
4. The Dy. Director General, PSS, GSI, CHQ, 27 JLN Road, Kolkata 700016
5. APC Drilling & Construction Private Limited, Room No.153/C7, Third floor, R.Gopal Complex Salem Road Namakkal, Tamil Nadu.
6. Bhushilp Mines and Minerals Pvt Ltd, Gajanan Sanmitra Co. Op, Plot No. 186, Trisaran Nagar, Shastri Layout, Khamla, Nagpur, Maharashtra-440022.
7. BMRC Geomining Solutions Pvt Ltd, C-20 Sector, C1 LDA Colony, Kanpur Road, Lucknow Pin - 226012, Uttar Pradesh.
8. Critical Mineral Trackers, 406, Concourse Bldg., Greenland's Main Road, OPP Lal Bungalow, Hyderabad CMT Geo Solution Center, E5, 3rd Floor, Technology Research Park, IIT, Kandi Hyderabad 500016, Telangana.
9. Deepsar Mineral Explorer, 6 Ka 16, Jawahar Nagar, Jaipur
10. Eartnenviro Lab Private Limited, Shop no-36, BDA PH-II CSPUR, Sailashree Vihar, Bhubaneswar.
11. Engeotech Consultant, 1338, Vijay Nagar Kachnar City Road Jabalpur-482002, Madhya Pradesh.
12. Enkay Enviro Services Pvt. Ltd., 92, Heera Nagar-A, Near Shalimar Bagh, Ajmer Road, Jaipur, Rajasthan – 302021.

13. Envirogreen Consultants (India) Private Limited, 1B, Macchla, Magra, Near, Patel Circle, Udaipur, Rajasthan 313002.
14. Gemcokati Exploration Private Limited, Plot No 34, Bapat Nagar, , Chandrapur, Maharashtra – 442401.
15. GEMS Project Pvt Ltd, 1236/2, Lajpat Nagar, Pundag Ranchi, Jharkhand-834004.
16. Geo Exploration and Mining Solution, 17, Advaita Ashram Rd, Arthanari Nagar, Fairlands, Salem, Tamil Nadu 636004.
17. Geo Marine Solutions Pvt. Ltd., Door No. 15-17-909/9, 5th Cross Shivbagh, Kadri, Behind Silverwood apartment, Leslie, Haven Compound, Mangalore - 575005 Karnataka.
18. GeoExpOre Pvt Ltd, No. 45 S 2nd A Main, 2nd Cross, Chandralayout, Bengaluru – 560040.
19. Geotechnical Mining Solutions, 1/213B Natesan Complex Tamil Nadu, Dharmapuri – 636705.
20. Geovale Services Pvt Ltd, GN 38/5, 3rd Floor, Sector V, Salt Lake, Kolkata 700 091, India West Bengal.
21. GMMCO Technology Services Ltd, 9A, Vaishnavi Cymbol, Financial District, Hyderabad, Nanakramguda, Telangana -500032.
22. Hindmetal Exploration Services Private Limited, Yashad Bhawan, Opp Swaroop Sagar,Udaipur, Rajasthan.
23. Indian Mine Planners & Consultants, GE-61 Rajdanga Main Road, Behind Vivanta Hotel, West Bengal, Kolkata – 700107.
24. Kartikay Exploration & Mining Services Pvt. Ltd, 101 & 102, Bhaskar Building Near MLA Hostel, Civil Lines, Nagpur, Maharashtra – 440001.
25. Kundan Concentrates Private Limited, 3, Scindia House, 2nd Floor, Janpath, Connaught Place, New Delhi-110001.
26. Maheshwari Mining Private Limited (MMPL Private Limited), 21, CLM Lane, Raniganj, Dist: Burdwan, West Bengal.
27. Mining Associates Private Limited, Plot no. 110, Main Dhemo, Beside Railway Siding, P.O. - Sitarampur, Asansol Dist. Paschim Bardhaman, West Bengal -713359.
28. Mining Tech Consultancy Services Limited, A 121, Paryavaran Complex, IGNOU Road, -110030, IGNOU Road, New Delhi, Delhi 110030.
29. My World Consultancy Services Private Limited, My World Consultancy Services Pvt. Ltd, Plot No: 766, Telengapentha, Cuttack, Odisha-754001.
30. Natural Resources Division-Tata Steel Limited, Natural Resources Division, Room No 349, 3rd Floor, Commercial Centre, General Office, Tata Steel Ltd, Bistupur, Jamshedpur – 831001.
31. Ocean Drilling and Exploration Private Limited, 24 A, Shanti Nagar,Near Diamond Residency, Jhotwara-302012, Rajasthan.
32. PRB Infraprojects Private Limited, S-3, 2nd Floor, Beside Indian Oil Petrol Pump, Medical Square, Nagpur-440024.
33. Ramgad Minerals and Mining Limited, Baldota Enclave, AbherajBaldota Road, Hosapete 583203.
34. S and S Geological Consultants, H. No.-6-2-37/A, Second Floor, Midas Touch Commercial Complex, Lakdikapul, Hyderabad -500004, Telangana.
35. Shijay Projects India Private Limited, A-23,24,25, Ground Floor, Logix Technova, Noida Sector 132, Uttar Pradesh.

36. Siddharth Geo. Consultant, 621/3, First Floor, Ramkund, Samta Colony, Behind Life Worth Hospital Raipur, Chhattisgarh.
37. Steiger Geoscience and Engineering Private Limited, Steiger Geoscience and Engineering Private Limited 3rd Floor, 2-2-24/A/46, D.D. Colony, Bagh Amberpet, Hyderabad 500 013, Telangana .
38. Synergy Geotech Private Limited, 51, Wardha Rd, Panchdip Nagar, Narendra Nagar, Somalwada, Nagpur, Maharashtra 440025.
39. Unised Research Consultants Private Limited, 152 Sector-B, New Vistar Yojana, Jarouli Phase-II, Barra Kanpur, Kanpur Nagar, Uttar Pradesh, 208027.
40. United Exploration India Pvt. Ltd., Tower 2A, 5th Floor, Action Area II, Ecospace Business Park, Rajarhat, New Town, Kolkata, West Bengal-700156.
41. Vardan Environet Llp, Plot No. 82A, Sector 5, IMT Manesar, Gurgaon-122051, Haryana.
42. Vibrant Techno Lab Private Limited, Steiger Geoscience and Engineering Private Limited 3rd Floor, 2-2-24/A/46, D.D. Colony, Bagh Amberpet, Hyderabad 500 013, Telangana Above SBI DD colony branch Phone: 9799397960.
43. Infrastructure Logistics Private Limited, 205, 2ndFloor, Kamat Metropolis-I, Behind Caculo Mall, St Inez Panaji North Goa 403001.
44. Novomine India Private Limited, 4th Floor, Building No-65, Opp-The Children's Hospital, Pohkse, Shillong, East Khasi Hills, Meghalaya-793006.
45. FCI Aravali, Gypsum and Minerals Ltd, B Rd, Bhadwasiya, Paota, Jodhpur, Rajasthan 342001
46. OMC Ltd., Gopabandhu Marg, Unit 4, Keshari Nagar, Bhubaneswar, Odisha 751001
47. The General Manager (ME), Mineral Exploration Department, KIOCL Limited, Bangalore - 560034. 24.MIs PRB Infra, S-3, 2nd Floor, Ratan Heights, Medical Chowk, Chandan Nagar, Nagpur, Maharashtra-440009
48. Hindustan Copper Ltd., 2th Floor, North Tower, Core 2, Scope Minar, Dist Centre, Laxmi Nagar, Swasthya Vihar, Delhi, 110092
49. Telangana Mineral Development Corporation (TGMDC), #6-2-915, HMWSSB Premises, Rear block, 3rd Floor, Khairatabad, Hyderabad, Telangana

Copy for kind information to

1. P.S. to Hon'ble Union Minister of Mines
2. OSD to Hon'ble Minister of State of Mines
3. PSO to Secretary, Ministry of Mines
4. Technical Secretary to Director General, GSI
5. PPS to Addl. Secretary, Ministry of Mines
6. TS to Controller General, Indian Bureau of Mines
7. PPS to JS & FA, Ministry of Mines
8. PPS to JS (FMN), Ministry of Mines
9. Chairmen and members, TCC-I and TCC-II
10. Members of Project Sanctioning Committee
11. PPS to JS (NCMM), Ministry of Mines
12. PS to Director General, NMEDT

Guidelines for Partial Reimbursement of Offshore Mineral Exploration Expenses for Composite License (CL) Holders

1. Background and Rationale

The National Mineral Exploration Policy (NMEP), 2016 envisages private sector participation in mineral exploration at every stage — from surveying to extraction. The goal of the policy is to harness private industry's technical expertise, advanced technology, and capital to unlock India's vast but underexplored mineral reserves. To encourage private sector participation, the policy includes incentives that help offset the inherent risks of exploration, where significant investment can yield uncertain returns.

Offshore mineral exploration in India's maritime zones — namely the territorial waters, continental shelf, and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) — is governed by (a) the Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 2002; (b) the Offshore Areas Operating Right Rules, 2024; (c) the Offshore Areas (Existence of Mineral Resources) Rules, 2024; (d) the Offshore Areas Mineral Conservation and Development Rules, 2024; and (e) the Offshore Areas Mineral (Auction) Rules, 2024 framework and the rules framed thereunder, which provide for the grant of mineral concessions and operating rights through transparent mechanisms, including auction.

Offshore exploration involves very high capital costs associated with marine surveys, specialised vessels, and exploratory drilling/coring; complex logistics along with significant safety and environmental challenges; long gestation periods; and elevated geological as well as commercial risks.

The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2025 has significantly broadened the mandate of the National Mineral Exploration and Development Trust (NMEDT). The Trust, originally established to promote mineral exploration within India, has now been empowered to utilise its funds for exploration and development of mines and minerals within India, including offshore areas.

Accordingly, with a view to encourage participation of private entities, accelerating the discovery and delineation of offshore mineral resources, and safeguarding national interest in mineral security and exploration data, the Government proposes to provide partial reimbursement of eligible exploration expenditure incurred by holders of Composite Licences (CLs) for offshore blocks granted through auction, subject to prescribed conditions relating to performance, statutory compliance, transparency, and mandatory data sharing.

2. Objectives

The Guidelines is designed to unlock India's offshore mineral potential with the following objectives:

- To promote offshore exploration.
- Accelerate resource delineation — Speed up the identification and mapping of offshore mineral deposits to build a clearer picture of available resources.

- Attract diverse expertise — Encourage participation of technically competent domestic agencies in offshore mineral block auctions and exploration activities.
- Secure national geoscience assets — Ensure all offshore data is generated in standardised formats, archived securely in national repositories, and made available to inform future mineral policy and planning.

3. Scope and Coverage

3.1 Geographical Scope

This Guidelines applies to offshore areas as defined in the OAMDR Act, 2002 and within the maritime zones of India as per the Territorial Waters, Continental Shelf, Exclusive Economic Zone and Other Maritime Zones Act, 1976, except:

- areas notified as prohibited or restricted for defence, security, or strategic reasons; or
- areas notified as no-go or highly regulated zones for environmental reasons by the competent authority.

3.2 Mineral Scope

The Guidelines covers exploration of offshore minerals as defined under OAMDR, except:

- mineral oils and hydrocarbons described in sub-section (1) of section 3 of the OAMDR Act, 2002; and
- minerals specified in Part B of the First Schedule to the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (Annexure 1) having a grade equal to or greater than the threshold value as notified by the Central Government from time to time.

3.3 Beneficiaries

The Guidelines is applicable to Composite Licence (CL) holders of offshore blocks granted through auction under the Offshore Areas Mineral (Auction) Rules, 2024, who:

- have executed the CL deed / operating right agreement;
- are in compliance with OAMDR, Offshore Operating Right Rules, 2024, and other applicable laws; and
- meet the eligibility conditions contained in this Guidelines.

4. Conditions

A Composite Licence (CL) holder qualifies for partial reimbursement only when all of the following conditions are met:

1. The CL must have been awarded through a competitive auction under the Offshore Areas Mineral (Auction) Rules, 2024. The CL deed or operating rights agreement must be fully executed, and the holder must be in good standing — not suspended, terminated, blacklisted, or declared a defaulter under OAMDR or any related legislation.
2. All exploration work must strictly follow the approved exploration plan, work programme, and any stage-wise plans (G4 / G3 / G2), along with the technical norms and minimum work requirements prescribed under the

offshore Rules. The CL holder must also comply with all applicable environmental laws and clearances, maritime safety and navigation regulations, and any conditions imposed by the Ministry of Mines and other regulatory bodies.

3. The CL holder must opt in and apply under this Guidelines within six months of CL grant, or within such period as may be notified while auctioning of CLs.
4. In case the exploration leads to signing of the production lease and production of minerals, then the holder of such production lease shall pay back the amount released by NMEDT within four years of commencement of production and dispatch of minerals.

5. Nature of Support under the Guidelines

- The Guidelines provides partial reimbursement of up to 50% of eligible exploration expenditure incurred by CL holders on approved offshore exploration activities within their CL blocks.
- Any sanction or rejection under this Guidelines shall not dilute or affect the obligations of CL holders under the Act, Rules, auction terms, or licence conditions.
- If exploration leads to the signing of a production lease and commencement of commercial production in the CL area, the reimbursed amount shall be repaid to the NMEDT in the manner laid down in Section 11.

6. Eligible Activities and Expenditure Heads

Subject to caps and conditions specified below, the following direct exploration activities are generally eligible for reimbursement:

6.1 Marine Surveys & Mapping

- Single/multibeam bathymetry and backscatter mapping etc.
- Sidescan sonar and related seafloor imaging etc.
- Shallow seismic/sub-bottom profiling and related geophysical surveys (gravity, magnetic, etc.) required for exploration.

6.2 Geological & Sampling Work

- Seabed sampling (grabs, box corers, piston/vibro corers, any other suitable methods).
- Core recovery, onboard and onshore core logging, preservation, and storage.

6.3 Exploratory Drilling/coring (Offshore)

- Coring and drilling operations aimed at delineating mineralisation.
- Drilling/coring consumables (drill pipes, bits, muds, and additives specifically used for exploration).

6.4 Laboratory and Analytical Work

- Chemical analysis (major, trace, REE, and other relevant elements).
- Mineralogical, sedimentological, petrographic, and mineragraphic studies.

- Advanced analytical work (e.g., XRD, SEM, EPMA, ICP-MS) as approved.
- Process / beneficiation tests on representative samples.

6.5 Research, Consultancy, and Specialised Services

- Pre-field map preparation, existing data integration etc.
- Geological/geophysical modelling and interpretation.
- Resource estimation and classification as per prescribed norms.
- Collaboration with national/international institutions for targeted studies, subject to approvals.

6.6 Project-specific Logistics and Support

- Vessel hiring/Chartering etc.
- Temporary onshore base/camp related only to the CL block.
- Local transportation of personnel, samples, and equipment.
- Field consumables and operational costs clearly linked to exploration activities and not covered by other activities.

6.7 Environmental Baseline & Monitoring (Project-linked)

Baseline environmental data collection and monitoring directly required for exploration activities and for compliance with environmental clearances and Rules, including:

- Water quality monitoring, sediment plume dispersion tracking.
- Marine biodiversity assessment, noise and vibration monitoring, benthic habitat mapping.
- Waste and discharge monitoring, air emissions.
- Third-party environmental audits, independent verification of compliance with clearance conditions, periodic compliance reporting

7. Ineligible Expenditure

No reimbursement shall be admissible for:

- Expenses incurred for activities other than those constituting the approved exploration programme.
- Corporate and administrative overheads unrelated to exploration, compensation, penalties or litigation expenses, pre-licence expenditure, and expenditure incurred in violation of statutory or regulatory provisions.
- Purchase of long-life capital equipment — such as vessels, large machinery, and vehicles — intended for use across multiple projects rather than exclusively for the approved project.

8. Scale and Limits of Reimbursement

The exploration expenses incurred by the CL holder towards preliminary marine surveys, sampling, drilling/coring, geochemical analysis and vessel hiring and charter etc. will be reimbursed at up to 50% of direct costs as per the Schedule

of Charges (SoC) of NMEDT, with an overall maximum ceiling of ₹300.00 Crore for the full programme. The table below indicates maximum ceiling of reimbursement at different stages of exploration. The maximum reimbursable amount at any stage (G4/G3/G2) is normally not transferable to next stage of exploration. However, the Executive Committee of NMEDT may approve such transfers.

8.1 Programme Cost Overview and Reimbursement Envelope

Stage	Resource Category	Reimbursement @ 50% with a maximum ceiling (INR Cr)
G4 — Reconnaissance	Reconnaissance	Up to 20
G3 — Preliminary	Inferred	Up to 80
G2 — General	Indicated	Up to 200
Grand Total (G4→G2)	—	Up to ₹300 Cr (overall cap)

8.2 Reconnaissance Survey (G4) Stage

Sl. No.	Study / Work	Components of Work	Scale of Reimbursement
1	Vessel Mobilisation and Demobilisation and Charter	Mob/demob of 3 vessels (geophysical, bathymetric and sampling)	Up to 50% of direct costs as per the SoC of NMEDT, with a maximum ceiling of ₹5.00 Crore.
2	Pre-field Studies	Procurement of satellite imagery and analysis. GIS mapping including compilation and integration of existing data for identification of prospective target zones, and planning of survey grids, traverse lines, and sampling locations.	Up to 50% of direct costs as per the SoC of NMEDT, with a maximum ceiling of ₹0.50 Crore.
3	Bathymetric Survey	MBES (Multi Beam Echo Sounders) Low resolution (1:3,00,000 to 1:50,000 scale).	Up to 50% of direct costs as per the SoC of NMEDT, with a maximum ceiling of ₹3.00 Crore.
4	Geophysical Survey	Shallow seismic profiling/sub-bottom profiling and related geophysical surveys (gravity, magnetic, etc.) on horizontal scale 1:50,000 and vertical scale 1:10,000.	Up to 50% of direct costs as per the SoC of NMEDT, with a maximum ceiling of ₹7.00 Crore.
5	Sampling and Analysis	Seabed sampling by grab, dredge, box corer or any other method at 5 × 5 km grid	Up to 50% of direct costs as

		spacing. Chemical, sedimentological, petrological, mineralogical, and geotechnical analysis/studies of samples.	per the SoC of NMEDT, with a maximum ceiling of ₹0.50 Crore.
6	Research Collaboration and Report	Research collaboration/consultancy/advisory. Synthesis of data generated, Geological Report preparation, and target prioritisation.	Up to 50% of direct costs as per the SoC of NMEDT, with a maximum ceiling of ₹0.50 Crore.
7	Environmental and Oceanographic Monitoring	Preliminary environmental screening.	Up to 50% of direct costs as per the SoC of NMEDT, with a maximum ceiling of ₹0.50 Crore.
8	Others	Logistics including setting up camp/office site, transportation, helicopter sorties, hiring of personnel, consumables, etc., not covered by other activities.	Up to 50% of direct costs as per the SoC of NMEDT, with a maximum ceiling of ₹2.00 Crore.
9	Contingency	Applied on all Sl. 1–8 sub-totals; weather delays, equipment downtime, data re-acquisition, port call extensions	Up to 50% as per the SoC of NMEDT, with a maximum ceiling of ₹1.0 Crore.
		Maximum Reimbursement	Upto 20 Crore

Note: Maximum of 10 to and fro sorties through helicopter from shore to the vessel will be allowed. Inspection sorties would be part of these limits.

8.3 Preliminary Exploration (G3) Stage

Sl. No.	Study / Work	Components of Work	Scale of Reimbursement
1	Vessel Mobilisation and Demobilisation and Charter	Vessel mobilisation, demobilisation, and/or vessel charter.	Up to 50% of direct costs as per the SoC of NMEDT, with a maximum ceiling of ₹28.0 Crore.
2	Bathymetric Survey	1:50,000 scale with data at 500 m or lesser intervals. High-resolution survey by single beam/multibeam echo sounder.	Up to 50% of direct costs as per the SoC of NMEDT, with a maximum ceiling of ₹8.00 Crore.
3	Geophysical Survey	Shallow seismic profiling/sub-bottom profiling and related geophysical surveys (gravity, magnetic, etc.) at 2 km interval (horizontal	Up to 50% of direct costs as per the SoC of NMEDT,

		scale 1:50,000; vertical scale 1:10,000).	with a maximum ceiling of ₹12.00 Crore.
4	Drilling/coring Operations	Drilling/coring (upto 15 m depth 30 m), core recovery, vibrocore, and gravity coring.	Up to 50% of direct costs as per the SoC of NMEDT, with a maximum ceiling of ₹12.0 Crore.
5	Sampling and Analysis	Seabed sampling using suitable corer or any other device at 2 × 2 km grid spacing, extending to a depth of at least 4 m. Chemical, sedimentological, petrological, mineralogical, and geotechnical analysis/studies of samples.	Up to 50% of direct costs as per the SoC of NMEDT, with a maximum ceiling of ₹5.0 Crore.
6	AUV / ROV Reconnaissance Operations	High-resolution seafloor mapping, visual inspection/videography, and limited sampling.	Up to 50% of direct costs as per the SoC of NMEDT, with a maximum ceiling of ₹5.0 Crore.
7	Research Collaboration and Report	Research collaboration /consultancy/ advisory. Synthesis of data generated, resource estimation, and Geological Report preparation.	Up to 50% of direct costs as per the SoC of NMEDT, with a maximum ceiling of ₹2.0 Crore.
8	Environmental and Oceanographic Monitoring	Oceanographic and environmental baseline data.	Up to 50% of direct costs as per the SoC of NMEDT, with a maximum ceiling of ₹1.0 Crore.
9	Others	Logistics including setting up camp/office site, transportation, helicopter sorties, hiring of personnel, consumables, etc., not covered by other activities.	Up to 50% of direct costs as per the SoC of NMEDT, with a maximum ceiling of ₹3.0 Crore.
10	Contingency	Applied on all Sl. 1–8 sub-totals; weather delays, equipment downtime, data re-acquisition, port call extensions	Up to 50% as per the SoC of NMEDT, with a maximum ceiling of ₹4.0 Crore.
		Maximum Reimbursement	Upto 80 Crore

Note: Maximum of 20 to and fro sorties through helicopter from shore to the vessel will be allowed. Inspection sorties would be part of these limits.

8.4 General Exploration (G2) Stage

Sl.	Study / Work	Components of Work	Scale of
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No.			Reimbursement
1	Vessel Mobilisation and Demobilisation / Drilling Vessel Charter	Vessel mobilisation, demobilisation, and/or advanced drilling vessel charter.	Up to 50% of direct costs as per the SoC of NMEDT, with a maximum ceiling of ₹65.0 Crore.
2	Bathymetric Survey	1:5,000 scale with seamless coverage having 25% side overlap. High-resolution survey by multibeam echo sounder. Backscatter data also to be generated.	Up to 50% of direct costs as per the SoC of NMEDT, with a maximum ceiling of ₹14.00 Crore.
3	Geophysical Survey	Shallow seismic profiling/sub-bottom profiling and related geophysical surveys (gravity, magnetic, etc.) at 1 km interval (horizontal scale 1:5,000; vertical scale 1:1,000).	Up to 50% of direct costs as per the SoC of NMEDT, with a maximum ceiling of ₹20.0 Crore.
4	Drilling/coring Operations	Drilling/coring (depth above 30 m), core recovery, vibrocoreing, and gravity coring.	Up to 50% of direct costs as per the SoC of NMEDT, with a maximum ceiling of ₹55.0 Crore.
5	AUV / ROV Operations	AUV for high-resolution seafloor mapping of target zones; ROV for drill support, seabed inspection/videography, and limited sampling.	Up to 50% of direct costs as per the SoC of NMEDT, with a maximum ceiling of ₹15.0 Crore.
6	Sampling and Analysis	Seabed sampling using suitable corer or any other device at 1 × 1 km grid spacing, extending to at least 6 m depth. Bulk sampling for metallurgical testing. Chemical, sedimentological, petrological, mineralogical, and geotechnical analysis/studies.	Up to 50% of direct costs as per the SoC of NMEDT, with a maximum ceiling of ₹12.0 Crore.
7	Research Collaboration and Report	Research collaboration/ consultancy/advisory. Synthesis of data, resource estimation, and Geological Report preparation.	Up to 50% of direct costs as per the SoC of NMEDT, with a maximum ceiling of ₹5.0 Crore.
8	Environmental and Oceanographic Monitoring	Environmental impact and oceanographic (currents, turbidity, ecology) monitoring.	Up to 50% of direct costs as per the SoC of NMEDT, with a maximum ceiling of ₹4.0 Crore.
9	Others	Logistics including setting up camp/office site, transportation, helicopter sorties hiring of	Up to 50% of direct costs as per

		personnel, consumables, etc., not covered by other activities.	the SoC of NMEDT, with a maximum ceiling of ₹5.0 Crore.
10	Contingency	Applied on all Sl. 1–9 sub-totals; weather delays, equipment downtime, data re-acquisition, port call extensions	Up to 50% as per the SoC of NMEDT, with a maximum ceiling of ₹5.0 Crore.
		Maximum Reimbursement	Upto 200 Crore

Note: Maximum of 30 to and fro sorties through helicopter from shore to the vessel will be allowed. Inspection sorties would be part of these limits.

9. Procedure for Submission of Proposal

The CL holders applying under the Guidelines shall submit their project proposal to the NMEDT. The proposal shall contain:

- General information in the format specified in Annexure 2 to this Guidelines.
- Detailed proposal along with estimated expenditure details in the format specified in Annexure 3 to this Guidelines.
- Annual Work Plan in the format specified in Annexure 4 to this Guidelines.
- A copy of the Composite Licence.

10. Evaluation, Approval, and Reimbursement

- Composite Licence (CL) holders shall submit exploration proposals in a stage-wise manner, progressing from G4 to G2. A proposal for the next stage of exploration shall be submitted only upon completion of the previous stage of exploration.
- After receiving the project proposal from the offshore CL holder, the Technical cum Cost Committee (TCC) of NMEDT will evaluate the proposal on technical and cost parameters and recommend to the Project Sanctioning Committee (PSC) or Executive Committee (EC). Based on the recommendation of the TCC, the PSC or EC will evaluate and approve the proposals. After approval by the PSC or EC, the necessary sanction order will be issued by NMEDT for reimbursement of exploration expenses as per details provided by the CL holder (Annexure 3). The entire process from submission of proposal to issuance of sanction order shall not take more than three months.
- TCC shall review progress from time to time and may recommend for further continuation/ discontinuation of exploration activities as the case may be, based upon the outcomes.
- The NMEDT shall monitor the progress of work from time to time, on its own or through nominated officers of the Central Government, GSI or any other agency decided by NMEDT/Ministry of Mines. The CL holder shall provide access to all sites and records such as geological maps, geophysical survey data, chemical data, and core logs to the experts during inspection visits.

11. Other Conditions

- i. The CL holder shall be solely responsible for carrying out offshore exploration activities in full compliance with: (a) the Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 2002; (b) the Offshore Areas Operating Right Rules, 2024; (c) the Offshore Areas (Existence of Mineral Resources) Rules, 2024; (d) the Offshore Areas Mineral Conservation and Development Rules, 2024; (e) the Offshore Areas Mineral (Auction) Rules, 2024; and (f) any other rules, regulations, guidelines, or orders issued by the Central Government, Ministry of Mines, or any competent authority from time to time.
- ii. The Composite Licence (CL) holder shall submit to NMEDT an Annual Work Plan detailing the proposed exploration activities, timelines, and estimated expenditure for the year.
- iii. Upon completion of prospecting operations, the CL holder shall submit the Geological Report (GR) to NMEDT within two months from the date of completion, and shall submit an interim/progress report at the end of every six months.
- iv. The NMEDT shall monitor the progress of work from time to time through its own/nominated officers or any other agency as decided by NMEDT/Ministry of Mines. The cost towards logistics (TA/DA, hotel stay, etc.) for inspection visits shall be borne by NMEDT. The cost of transportation of inspecting officers between shore and exploration vessels shall be covered as mentioned in foot note of Para 8.2, Para 8.3 and Para 8.4.
- v. The CL holder shall make all exploration expenses through a dedicated bank account and maintain duly audited books of accounts.
- vi. As per Rule 172(1)(ii) of GFR 2017, in case the CL holder wishes to avail a mobilisation advance (up to 30% or 40% of the approved reimbursable cost, as the case may be), the CL holder must submit a Bank Guarantee (BG, including e-Bank Guarantee)/Insurance Surety Bond (ISB) of equal value of advance to NMEDT. A Composite Licence (CL) holder may avail mobilisation advance up to 30% of the approved reimbursable cost where the exploration work is entrusted to a private agency. In cases where the exploration work is entrusted to a Government agency or Public Sector Undertaking (PSU), mobilisation advance may be released up to 40% of the approved reimbursable cost, in accordance with Rule 172(1)(ii) of the General Financial Rules (GFR), 2017. The advance paid will be adjusted in the first bill submitted by the CL holder, and a Utilisation Certificate must be submitted along with the bills. The BG/ISB should remain valid for 60 days beyond the date of project completion and acceptance of the geological report by NMEDT, and shall be released within 30 days after settlement of the mobilisation advance.
- vii. The CL holder shall share geological and geophysical data/results of the detailed exploration along with a Geological Report with the Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM) for the National Mineral Inventory (NMI) and with the Geological Survey of India (GSI) for uploading to the National Geoscience Data Repository (NGDR), or any other mechanism as specified by NMEDT from

time to time.

- viii. The recovered cores from exploratory drilling/coring activities shall be handed over by the CL holder to the Marine & Coastal Survey Division, GSI for future reference.
- ix. The reimbursement shall be made in a maximum of six instalments. The amount reimbursed in each instalment shall not exceed 50% of the expenditure incurred. Reimbursement shall be made on submission of half-yearly expenditure bills duly certified by a Chartered Accountant, accompanied by an interim report of progress. Reimbursement shall be settled through the Public Finance Management System (PFMS) in the dedicated bank account furnished by the CL holder (Annexure 2).
- x. Since the reimbursed amount is repayable to the National Mineral Exploration and Development Trust (NMEDT) within four years of commencement of production and dispatch of minerals, reimbursement shall be released only upon submission of a Bank Guarantee (BG) issued by a scheduled commercial bank or an Insurance Surety Bond (ISB) of an amount equal to the reimbursement claimed. The CL holder may submit the BG/ISB in a phased manner, corresponding to the stages (G4/G3/G2) of exploration. However, the phasewise submitted ISB/BG, will be released only after full repayment to NMEDT, in case, CL leads to signing of Production Lease and production of minerals. The Bank Guarantee (BG) or Insurance surety bond (ISB) must be drawn in favour of the National Mineral Exploration and Development Trust (NMEDT), payable to the Pay & Accounts Office, Ministry of Mines, New Delhi.
- xi. The bank guarantee or insurance surety bond shall remain valid for 5 years initially. If the validity of ISB/BG expires prior to full repayment to NMEDT, it is to be renewed at least 6 months prior to expiry, for the period till the amount is repaid to NMEDT. In the event that the Insurance Surety Bond (ISB) or Bank Guarantee (BG) is not renewed, NMEDT shall be entitled to invoke and encash the ISB/BG, 15 days prior to expiry of ISB/BG, without any prior notice to the Composite Licence (CL) holder.
- xii. In the event that the Composite Licence (CL) holder abandons the exploration programme, NMEDT shall be entitled to invoke and encash the Insurance Surety Bond (ISB) or Bank Guarantee (BG) to recover the reimbursement released to the CL holder without any prior notice, thereby safeguarding Government funds.
- xiii. The beneficiary holder of the CL, shall submit an undertaking to repay the sanctioned amount to NMEDT. In case the holder of the composite licence (CL) fails to repay, the amount reimbursed by NMEDT, the same will be recovered by NMEDT by encashing the Bank Guarantee/insurance bond, without any notice. A standard format of undertaking is attached as Annexure 5.
- xiv. TCC and EC of NMEDT will be competent authorities for dispute resolution, arising out of this Guidelines. Matters involving statutory violations or criminal liability under the OAMDR Act, 2002, the Offshore Areas Operating Right

Rules, 2024, the Offshore Areas (Existence of Mineral Resources) Rules, 2024, the Offshore Areas Mineral Conservation and Development Rules, 2024, the Offshore Areas Mineral (Auction) Rules, 2024 shall continue to be addressed through the prescribed regulatory/legal process under the Act.

- xv. The Ministry of Mines/NMEDT reserves the right to modify this Guidelines as may be necessary from time to time.

Annexure 1

MMDR Act, 1957: Part B of the First Schedule (Atomic Minerals)

Minerals specified below (Part B, First Schedule to the MMDR Act, 1957, as amended in 2023) are excluded from the Guidelines where the grade meets or exceeds the threshold notified by the Central Government:

S. No.	Atomic Mineral
1	Minerals of the "rare earths" group containing Uranium and Thorium.
2	Phosphorites and other phosphatic ores containing Uranium.
3	Pitchblende and other Uranium ores.
4	Uraniferous allanite, monazite and other thorium minerals.
5	Uranium-bearing tailings left over from ores after extraction of copper and gold, ilmenite and other titanium ores.
6	Beach sand minerals: economic heavy minerals found in teri or beach sands — ilmenite, rutile, leucoxene, garnet, monazite, zircon and sillimanite.

Annexure 2

Details Required for Partial Reimbursement Claim

Details required for partial reimbursement towards offshore exploration expenses for Composite Licence holders granted through auction:

S. No.	Particular	Details / Response
1	Name of Composite Licence Holder	
2	Legal Status (Power of Attorney / Affidavit / Registered Deed)	
	i. Postal Address	
	ii. Telephone Number (Office)	
	iii. Fax Number (Office)	
	iv. Mobile No.	
	v. Email ID	
3	ITR Details	
4	Details required for PFMS	
	Type of Registration (Institution / CPSE / SPSE / Private etc.)	
	PAN Number	
	Agency Name	
	Registration No. (if available)	
	Date of Registration (if available)	
	Registering Authority (if available)	
	State of Registration	
	TIN/TAN Number	
	GST Number	
	Address (Block/Building/Village/Road/Street/Post Office)	
	Area / Locality / City	
	Area / District	
	Pin Code	
	Contact Person & Designation	
	Mobile No. / E-mail	

	Bank Account Number	
	Name as per Bank A/C	
	IFSC Code / Branch & Bank Detail	
5	IBM Registration Number	
6	Unique IBM Operating Right Number	
7	Particulars of Operating Right	
8	Details of Composite Licence (Mineral, Area in Sq. Km., No. of Standard Blocks, Exploration Agency, Exploration Level, Morphology)	
9	Location Details (NHO Chart No., Nearest Harbour/Port, Airport)	
10	Particulars of Vessel to be Deployed (Name, Dimensions, Draft, Country of Registration, Year of Registration, Period of Deployment, Certificates, Clearances, Crew, Equipment, Technical Personnel)	

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Designation: _____

Detailed Proposal Format

Part A: For Reconnaissance Survey (G4 Stage)

Proposal for [Block Name] [Commodity Name] Block, Off _____ State
For Reconnaissance Survey (G4 Stage) under NMEDT

1. Block Summary

- Physiography of the block including relief of the area / seabed with minimum and maximum water depths, water bodies joining the sea nearby.
- Brief regional geomorphology/seabed morphology outlining the broad geological and structural framework.
- Type of deposit based on the style of mineralisation and minerals under investigation.
- Suggested exploration/production plan with spacing of sampling points and depth of exploration commensurate with the stage of exploration.
- Scope for proposed exploration.
- Observations and recommendations of previous work.

2. Previous Work

- Name of holder(s) of operating right involved in exploration of the area, with year and period of exploration.
- Brief details of previous exploration carried out.
- Reserves or resources estimated, if any, during previous exploration campaigns, with quantity and grade under various categories.
- Details of sample points (surface and sub-surface) with geographical coordinates plotted on geological map; analytical data discussed briefly.

3. Block Description

Block Cardinal Points	NHO Chart Number	Latitude	Longitude
A			
B			
C			
D			
E etc.			

4. Planned Methodology

5. Nature, Quantum, and Target

Component	G4 Stage Requirements
Bathymetric Survey	Bathymetric map at 1:50,000 scale prepared with single beam/multi beam echo sounder or spot depth measurement at appropriate intervals and tie lines.
Shallow Seismic Profiling	One or more shallow seismic profiles/sub-bottom profiler across the block indicating the disposition of subsurface sedimentary units/rocks, presented in horizontal scale 1:50,000 and vertical scale 1:10,000.
Seabed Sampling	Seabed sampling using grab or any other device at 5 × 5 km grid spacing.
Videography	At least in 5 × 5 km grid at selected locations for Deep Sea Minerals, REE Minerals, Hydrothermal Minerals/Iron Manganese Crusts and Nodules.
Chemical Analysis	Chemical analysis of bulk sediments/rock for major oxides and trace elements/REE to determine mineral occurrence.
Sedimentological, Petrographic, and Mineragraphic Studies	Principal rock types, mineral assemblage, identification of mineral constituents, their size range and content, nature of occurrence, etc.
Synthesis of Data	Synthesis of all available data to identify various minerals and their prospective locations; report writing.
Any other components	Any other components

6. Estimated Expenditure Details

Part B: For G3, G2 Stages

Proposal for [Block Name] [Commodity Name] Block, Off _____ State
For [G3 / G2] Stage of Offshore Mineral Exploration under NMEDT

1. Block Summary

- Physiography and seabed morphology with minimum and maximum water depths.
- Brief regional geomorphology and geological/structural framework.
- Type of deposit; style of mineralisation and minerals under investigation.
- Suggested exploration plan with sampling spacing and depth commensurate with the stage.
- Scope for proposed exploration.
- Observations and recommendations of preceding stage exploration report.

2. Previous Work

- Attach complete Geological Report of the preceding stage (G4 for G3; G4 + G3 for G2).
- Brief details of exploration carried out at preceding stage(s).
- Reserves or resources estimated, with quantity and grade under various categories.
- Details of sample points with geographical coordinates plotted on geological map.

3. Block Description

Block Corner Points	NHO Chart Number	Latitude	Longitude
A			
B			
C			
D			
E etc.			

4. Planned Methodology

5. Nature, Quantum, and Target

Component	G3 Stage	G2 Stage
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Bathymetric Survey	1:50,000 scale, 500 m interval single/multibeam.	1:5,000 scale multibeam with 25% overlap; backscatter data.
Shallow Seismic/SBP	2 km × 2 km interval; H:1:50,000, V:1:10,000 scale.	1 km interval; H:1:5,000, V:1:1,000 scale.
Seabed Sampling/Drilling/coring	2 × 2 km grid, min. 4 m depth corer.	1 km × 1 km grid, min. 6 m depth; bulk samples for beneficiation.
Videography / AUV/ROV	2 × 2 km grid at selected locations.	Environmental parameters: current, waves, wind, water quality, TSS.
Chemical Analysis	Bulk sediments/rock for major oxides, trace elements/REE.	Bulk sediments/rock and constituent minerals; lab-scale beneficiation.
Sedimentological & Mineralogical Studies	Identify mineral constituents, size range, content, nature of occurrence	Identify mineral constituents, size range, content, nature of occurrence
Synthesis and Resource Statement	Synthesis of all data; Resource Estimation; UNFC G3 Inferred Resource Statement.	3D block model; Resource Estimation, UNFC G2 Indicated Resource Statement.
Any other component	Any other component	Any other component

6. Estimated Expenditure Details

Annexure 4

Format for Submitting Annual Work Plan

(To be submitted at the onset of every field season)

Block Name: _____

Block Area: _____

Field Season Year: _____

Part A: Annual Work Plan — G4 Stage

Sl. No.	Geological Parameters	Quantum of Work
A	BATHYMETRIC SURVEY	
1	Bathymetric Survey (1:50,000 scale)	(in L. km/ Sq. km)
B	GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY	
1	Shallow Seismic Profiling	(in L km)
C	SEABED SAMPLING	
1	Seabed Sampling at 5 km × 5 km grid spacing	(in nos.)
D	VIDEOGRAPHY	
1	At least in 5 × 5 km grid at selected locations	
E	CHEMICAL AND PETROLOGICAL ANALYSIS / MINERAL BENEFICIATION	
1	Bulk sediments/rock for major oxides, trace elements/REE	(in nos.)
2	Samples for petrological and sedimentological study	(in nos.)
3	EPMA / SEM / LA-ICPMS Studies	(in nos.)
4	Any other analysis	
F	RESEARCH COLLABORATION / CONSULTANCY / ADVISORY	
	Tentative collaborations/consultancies (additional may be added with TCC NMEDT approval)	
G	ANY OTHER COMPONENTS	
	Any other components than that mentioned above	
H	JUSTIFICATION FOR TAKING UP THE PROJECT	
	Details with integration of available data	

Part B: Annual Work Plan — G3 / G2 Stage

Sl. No.	Geological Parameters	Quantum of Work
A	BATHYMETRIC SURVEY	
1	Bathymetric Survey (scale as per stage)	(in sq. km)
B	GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY	
1	Shallow Seismic Profiling (interval as per stage)	(in L km)
C	DRILLING/CORING	
	Drilling/coring (rotary / vibrocorer as per stage)	(in m)
D	SEABED SAMPLING	
1	Seabed Sampling (grid as per stage)	(in nos.)
E	VIDEOGRAPHY / AUV / ROV OPERATIONS	
1	As per grid and stage requirements	
F	CHEMICAL AND PETROLOGICAL ANALYSIS / MINERAL BENEFICIATION	
1	Bulk sediments/rock for major oxides, trace elements/REE	(in nos.)
2	Samples for petrological and sedimentological study	(in nos.)
3	EPMA / SEM / LA-ICPMS Studies	(in nos.)
4	Any other analysis	
G	RESEARCH COLLABORATION / CONSULTANCY / ADVISORY	
	Tentative collaborations/consultancies (additional may be added with TCC NMEDT approval)	
H	ANY OTHER COMPONENTS	
	Any other components than that mentioned above	
I	JUSTIFICATION FOR TAKING UP THE PROJECT	
	Details with integration of available data	

Note: All exploration activities shall be carried out following the norms of the Offshore Areas (Existence of Minerals) Rules, 2024 and amendments thereafter.

Annexure 5

UNDERTAKING BY COMPOSITE LICENCE (CL) HOLDER

I / We , _____, authorized signatory of _____ (Name of the Composite Licence Holder/Company), holder of the Composite Licence for _____ Block off _____ State, do hereby undertake that we have applied for reimbursement of exploration expenses under the Guidelines for Partial Reimbursement of Offshore Mineral Exploration Expenses for Composite Licence (CL) Holders, administered by the National Mineral Exploration and Development Trust (NMEDT), Ministry of Mines, Government of India.

I/We unconditionally hereby undertake that in the event the exploration carried out under the above-mentioned Composite Licence leads to the **execution/signing of a Production Lease** and commencement of production and dispatch of minerals, we the composite license holder including out legal assigners/heirs shall repay the amount reimbursed/released by NMEDT under the Guidelines.

I/We also undertake that in the event of insolvency, or incapacity of the Executant before the full repayment of amount received by as partial reimbursement, the Executant hereby declares that this Undertaking shall remain valid and legally enforceable against his/her legal heirs, survivors, successors-in-interest, and administrators.

I/We further undertake that the entire amount reimbursed by NMEDT shall be repaid within a period of four (04) years from the date of commencement of production and dispatch of minerals, in accordance with the provisions of the Guidelines and the directions issued by NMEDT/Ministry of Mines from time to time.

I/We hereby agrees to indemnify and keep the NMEDT indemnified against any losses, costs, charges, or legal expenses incurred by the NMEDT due to any default in payment or breach of any terms contained in this Deed.

I/We also acknowledge that in the event of failure to repay the reimbursed amount within the stipulated period, such amount shall **be** treated as dues payable by the Composite Licence holder and shall be recoverable in accordance with the provisions of the Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) (OAMDR) Act, 2002 and the rules framed thereunder, including initiation of appropriate recovery proceedings by the competent authority.

I/We hereby also agrees for the submission of Bank Guarantee/Insurance surety

bond of equal amount, in order to receive the reimbursement of expenditure under the Guidelines, in favour of National Mineral Exploration and Development Trust (NMEDT) payable to Pay & Accounts Office, Ministry of Mines at New Delhi.

This undertaking is being submitted to NMEDT along with the claim for reimbursement of exploration expenses under the above-mentioned Guidelines.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the I/We has/have signed this Deed on the day and year first above written.

EXECUTANT *(Signature)* Name: _____

Aadhar No: _____

WITNESS 1: *(Signature)* Name: _____

Address: _____

WITNESS 2: *(Signature)* Name: _____

Address: _____

Seal of the Company

Date: _____

Place: _____
