



## Wildlife Panel Holds Virtual Conference

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### Why in News

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Recently, the Standing Committee of the **National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)** had its first ever video-conferencing meet. In the meet the **NBWL cleared infrastructure projects in 11 States.**

### Key Points

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- According to experts associated with the conference **most of the projects were given “in-principal approval”.**
  - In a virtual conference, it is difficult to scrutinise maps that show the location of the proposed projects.
  - It is because only the formal minutes of the meeting would reveal the conditions which projects would have to adhere to.
- Projects that encroach into forests or protected reserves **require NBWL approval** as part of the government’s **environmental clearance process.**

### Environment Clearance (EC) Process

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- An **Environment Impact Assessment (EIA)** report is prepared to get Environment Clearance (EC) for a project.
- A process of **‘Public Hearing’** is conducted before the issue of **‘Consent to Establish (NOC)’ by state regulators.** Concerns of people living in the proposed project area are heard.
- An application form with EIA report, details of public hearing and **NOC is submitted for environmental clearance with the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) if the project falls under A category or the state government if the project falls under B category.**

- The documents submitted for A and B category are then analyzed by an **Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC)** under the Union Environment Ministry or the concerned **State Environmental Impact Assessment Authorities (SEIAAs)** respectively.
- The recommendations of the Committee gets processed in the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change for final approval or rejection.

### **National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)**

- National Board for Wildlife is a **statutory Board** constituted officially in 2003 under the **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972**.
- The NBWL is **chaired by the Prime Minister** and is **responsible for promotion of conservation and development of wildlife and forests**.
- The **board is 'advisory' in nature** and can only advise the Government on policy making for conservation of wildlife.
- It is an important body because it serves as an apex body for the review of all wildlife-related matters and for the approval of projects in and around national parks and sanctuaries.
- The **standing committee** of NBWL is chaired by the Minister of Environment Forest and Climate Change.
  - The standing committee approves all the projects falling within protected wildlife areas or within 10 km of them.

**Source: TH**