

**DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
AND
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN
FOR**

PROPOSED MINING OF SOAPSTONE

AT

**VILLAGE: KHULDOARI BALDOARI,
TEHSIL & DISTRICT: BAGESHWAR,
UTTARAKHAND**

AREA: 12.579 HA, PROPOSED CAPACITY: 25,000 TPA (MAXIMUM)

PROJECT PROPONENT

M/S Uttarakand Mine Minerals

Shri. Pankaj Bhat

Village Haripur Nayak, Godapadav, Bareilly road,

Haldwani, District- Nainital

(Uttarakhand)

PREPARED BY

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(Accredited by NABET (Quality Council of India)

For EIA studies as 'A' Category Consultant

(Sl.No. 49th, List of Accredited Consultant Organizations April 2019)

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July 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Report

M/s Uttarakhand Mine Minerals proposes the Soapstone Mine extending over an area of 12.759 ha (25000 TPA (maximum) of Soapstone) in Village – Khuldoari Baldoari, Tehsil & District - Bageshwar, Uttarakhand. The proposal for TOR was considered in its meeting dated 03 June 2021 and since the project comes under B1 Category with cluster situation. The draft Environmental Impact Assessment report has been prepared to comply with the standard Terms of Reference (ToR), under EIA notification of the MoEF&CC dated 14th September, 2006 and amended thereof, for seeking environmental clearance for mining of soapstone in the applied mining lease area.

Identification of Project & Project Proponent

Identification of Project

The Proposed Soapstone mine is executed over an area of 12.579 ha in Village – Khuldari Baldoari, Tehsil & District - Bageshwar, Uttarakhand. The maximum production rate is of 25000 TPA of soapstone production.

The cost of the project is Rs.30 lakhs.

Project Proponent

The project proponent is M/s Uttarakhand Mine minerals. The proposed Soapstone Mine extends over an area of 12.579 Ha (25000 TPA (maximum) of Soapstone) Village – Khuldoari Baldoari, Tehsil & District - Bageshwar, Uttarakhand. The LOI of proposed Soapstone Mine was granted in favour of M/s Uttarakhand Mine minerals for period of 50 years by the Govt. of Uttarakhand. The proposed rate of production is 25000 TPA (maximum) of soapstone. The estimated project cost is Rs 30 lakhs. The expected life of mine is 50 years.

Address of the applicant

M/s Uttarakhand Mine Minerals

Registered Address - Village – Haripur Nayak, Ghodapadav, Bareilly road, Haldwani,
District – Nainital, Uttarakhand

The proponent has applied for environmental clearance for mining lease in the name of Soapstone (Agricultural Land) Mining Project over an area of 12.579 ha at Village – Khuldoari Baldoari, Tehsil & District - Bageshwar, Uttarakhand.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Nature of the Project

The proposed Soapstone Mine, project will adopt opencast manual cum semi mechanized method. The mine is executed over a lease area of about 12.579 ha, for the production of 25000 TPA of soapstone.

Therefore as per the EIA Notification dated 15th January, 2016 and 1st July, 2016, the project comes under "B1" Category since the area is greater than 5 ha.

Size of the Project

The proposed Soapstone mining project extends over an area of 12.579 ha with the target maximum production capacity of mine is about 25000 TPA (maximum) of Soapstone.

Anticipated Life of Project and Cost of the Project

The projected life of the mine is 50 years. The cost of the project is about Rs. 30 lakhs.

Location of the Project

The proposed Soapstone Mine lease comes under Village – Khuldoari Baldoari, Tehsil & District - Bageshwar, Uttarakhand. Geo-graphically the ML area extends from North Latitude :29° 52' 15.74" N to 29° 52' 33.58"N and East Longitude: 79° 47' 52.06" E to 79° 48' 8.17"E with an elevation of about 1350 m reduced level (RL). The area falls in Survey of India topo sheet No. 53 O/13.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Salient Features of Mine Lease

The salient features of mine lease are given in **Table E-1** below:

Table E-1: Salient Features of mine lease area

Sr. No.	Parameter	Description
1	Name of the Mine	Proposed Khuldoari Baldoari Soapstone Mine (Area: 12.579 ha.) at Village Khuldoari Baldoari, Tehsil & District: Bageshwar, Uttarakhand by M/s Uttarakhand Mine Minerals.
2	Mining Capacity	25000 (maximum) TPA of Soapstone
3	Longitude Latitude	29° 52' 15.74" N to 29° 52' 33.58"N 79° 47' 52.06" E to 79° 48' 8.17"E
4	Method of mining	Opencast semi mechanized method
5	Total ML area	12.579 Ha
6	Extent of mechanization	Excavator shall be deployed for extraction of top soil, interburden and mineral. No drilling and blasting will be done.
7	Bench height & width	3m

Khuldoari Baldoari Soapstone Mine (Area: 12.579 ha.) at Village Khuldoari Baldoari, Tehsil & District: Bageshwar, Uttarakhand by M/s Uttarakhand Mine Minerals.	<u>Draft EIA/EMP</u>
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8	Bench Slope	70°
9	Slope of track	1:8 to 1:20
10	Transportation of Material	The mineral will be supplied in the local market by trucks/tippers.
11	Manpower	59 persons
12	Water Requirement	10 KLD
13	Source of Water	Nearby Natural Springs (nalah)
14	Greenbelt development / Plantation (Mine life end)	0.3913 ha
15.	No. of saplings proposed in the next 5 years	11760

10.4.2 Mine Development and Production

The mining will be done semi-mechanized way in open cast method in quite a systematic manner by forming 3m high benches. However, there may be minor variation in the width and-height which the lessee will keep on mending. The top soil and interburden to be scrapped with the help of JCB machine, dozer, shovels, pickaxe, spade & crowbar and will be stacked separately in dump yard located near the working pit. The developmental working will be done by construction of road/track to different working benches, removal of top soil and interburden. The soil will be filled into the bags, loaded on mules and unload into stockyard.

Year wise Production details are given in **Table E-2** below.

Table E-2: Year wise Production of Soapstone Mine

Year	I	II	III	IV	V	Total
Proposed Production (Tonne)	15000	20000	25000	25000	25000	110000

The quantity of top soil, waste rock from pit to be generated during next five years is given in **Table E-3** below:

Table E-3: Quantity of Top soil

Year	Top Soil (cum)	Interburden (cum)	Mineral Rejects (cum)
I	4347	16667	21013
II	5731	20669	26400
III	4662	27084	31746
IV	4292	24729	29021
V	4129	25655	29784
Total	23160	114804	137964

Method of Mining

The salient points of proposed method of mining are given below:

- The mining will be done semi-mechanized way in open cast method in quite a systematic manner by forming 3m to 9m high benches with 1.5m to 3.0m sub-benches. However, there may be minor variation in the width and height which the lessee will keep on mending.
- The top soil and interburden to be scrapped with the help of JCB machine, dozer, shovels, pickaxe, spade & crowbar and will be stacked separately in dump yard located near the working pit.
- The extracted mineral is properly sorted out at the mine site. Crow bars are sometimes used to dislodge the mineral.
- The excavation for soapstone will be made through JCB Machine, dozer, shovels, pickaxe, spade & crowbar.
- It is proposed to make 3m to 9m height benches which will be sliced in different stages each of 6.0m, 3.0m high with 1.5m height sub benches.
- The slope of the faces will be kept 60° - 70° and the ultimate slope of the pit will remain 45° .
- Developmental work will be done by construction of road/track to different working benches, removal of top soil and interburden.
- The soil will be filled into the bags, loaded on mules and unload into stockyard.
- The interburden generated during mining will be separately stacked and places shown within the applied area which will be backfilled.
- Sorting of high grade soapstone will be done on the benches by the labourers and it will be graded.
- The local people will be used for removal of mineral to the nearest road point from where the minerals will be transported by trucks to Haldwani.
- The mineral will be loaded over the trucks by the manual labour. The pit will be connected by track/foot path to the main road.
- The slope of track may vary from 1:8 to 1:20.
- Each mining face will be connected by track/road having width 3.0m.
- Exploitation of soapstone is small scale of mining and does not require any drilling & blasting.
- The average rate of production of soapstone is estimated in between 15000 to 25000 tonnes from I year to V year.

IMPACT ON LAND USE, RECLAMATION OF MINED OUT AREAS AND AFFORESTATION PROGRAMME

Impact on land use & reclamation of mined out areas

Opencast mining activities may alter the landscape of the lease area and also cause some disturbance to the surface features of the surrounding areas. Mining will be done after leaving 7.5 m safety barrier.

Plantation will be developed in consultation with district administration/ local authority, wherever feasible.

The Existing land use pattern is agricultural land. The impact on land form or physiography will be land use on the hilly terrain will undergo radical changes due to the open cast mining.

Proposal for reclamation of land affected by mining activities:

The mining will commence from the higher levels and will advance towards lower levels. Intermittent backfilling will commence from the higher levels and subsequently advance towards the lower elevation so that terraced agriculture fields would undertake in such a manner that original land use will be restored i.e. before the onset of monsoon will be handed over to cultivators for cultivation. The final backfilling will be started once the ultimate benches are formed and pit reaches the optimum economic depth. All recovery of the mineral will be of the saleable grade.

Plantation will be raised in 7.5m barrier zone along the boundaries of the mining lease area by planting the native species around ML area, backfilled and reclaimed area, around water body, roads etc. in consultation with the local DFO/Agriculture department. The details of the year wise plantation have been shown in **Table E-4**.

Table E-4: Year wise Afforestation scheduled

Year	Plantation within 7.5m of the area	Total no. of sapling
	Area (ha.)	
2020-21	0.0577	260
2021-22	0.0751	338
2022-23	0.0750	338
2023-24	0.1049	472
2024-25	0.0786	354
Total	0.3913	1760*

***Besides the year wise plantation Total 1760 sapling will be done in five years and 10000 sapling upto lease period in Van Panchayat and forest land after taking due permission from concerning authority.**

LAND USE PATTERN

Presently (pre-mining), the land covered under the mine lease area is non-forest agricultural land.

BASELINE ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS

Soil Quality

Five soil samples were collected in and around the mine lease area to assess the present soil quality of the region. In the study area, variations in the pH of the soil were found to be slightly basic (7.36 to 7.88). Electrical conductivity (EC) is a measure of the soluble salts and ionic activity in the soil. In the collected soil samples the conductivity ranged from 220.12 – 340.26 $\mu\text{mhos/cm}$.

Based on the results, it is evident that the soils are not contaminated by any polluting sources.

Meteorology

Meteorological data at the site was monitored during 1st Dec 2020 to 28 Feb 2021 representing winter season.

Ambient Air Quality Monitoring (AAQM) has been carried out at five locations during winter season from Dec 2020 to Feb 2021. The minimum and maximum level of PM10 recorded within the study area was in the range of 34.5 $\mu\text{g/m}^3$ to 60.7 $\mu\text{g/m}^3$ with the 98th percentile ranging between 45.2 $\mu\text{g/m}^3$ to 60.42 $\mu\text{g/m}^3$. The minimum and maximum level of PM2.5 recorded within the study area was in the range of 12.4 $\mu\text{g/m}^3$ to 28.3 $\mu\text{g/m}^3$ with the 98th percentile ranging between 21.3 $\mu\text{g/m}^3$ to 28.16 $\mu\text{g/m}^3$. The minimum and maximum concentration of SO₂ recorded within the study area was 5.0 to 8.5 $\mu\text{g/m}^3$ with the 98th percentile ranging between 5.4 $\mu\text{g/m}^3$ to 8.4 $\mu\text{g/m}^3$. The minimum and maximum level of NO₂ recorded within the study area was in the range of 5.7 $\mu\text{g/m}^3$ to 20.4 $\mu\text{g/m}^3$ with the 98th percentile ranging between 13.2 $\mu\text{g/m}^3$ to 20.2 $\mu\text{g/m}^3$. The results thus obtained indicate that the concentrations of PM10, PM2.5, SO₂ and NO₂ in the Ambient Air are well within the National Ambient Air Quality (NAAQ) standards for Industrial, Residential, Rural and other areas.

Water Quality

To assess the physical and chemical properties of water in the region, water samples from 7 locations were collected from various water sources around the mine lease area.

The pH was varying for ground water from 7.36 to 7.86 and the surface water were 7.28 to 7.37. The total dissolved solids in ground water were varying from 196.4 mg/l to 413.34 mg/l whereas in surface water varying from 186.98 mg/l to 190.16 mg/l. The chloride level in the ground water samples collected in the study area were ranging from 12.6 mg/l to a maximum of 47 mg/l similarly, in surface water samples 16.8 mg/l to 17.9 mg/l. The hardness were varying from the hardness were varying from 182.44 mg/l to 288.2 mg/l and in surface water sample from 187.14 mg/l to 189.12 mg/l.

The results indicate groundwater is generally in conformity with the drinking water standards (IS: 10500:2012) and surface water is in conformity with IS-2296 standards.

Noise Levels

Ambient noise levels were measured at Five locations around the proposed mine site. Assessment of average logarithm night time Leq (Ln) varies from 38.3 to 55.7 dB (A) and the average logarithm daytime Leq (Ld) varies from 49.2 to 62.3 dB (A) within the study area.

Ecological Environment

Based on the field studies and review of published literature, it is observed that there are two Schedule-I species present in the study area of the mine lease area i.e. Indian Leopard and Asiatic Black Bear. There are no wildlife sanctuaries and National Parks within the study area of 10-km radius. However, the nearest RF from the mine lease is Khuldoari Baldoari reserve forest at a distance of 200 m.

Social Environment

According to the 2011 census of India, Bageshwar has a population of 2,59,898. The total SC population in Bageshwar district is 72,061 which is 27.72% of the total population, while ST population is 1982, which is 0.76% of the total population. The literate population in Bageshwar district is 1,79,483, out of which male & female are 97,546 and 81,937 respectively. The male literates represent 54.35% while female represent 45.65% of the total population.

ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Impact on Air Quality

Soapstone mine where PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} will be the main pollutants generated in mining activities. The emissions of Sulphur dioxide (SO₂), Nitrogen Oxide (NO₂) contributed by diesel operated equipment and vehicles movement were considered marginal as branded make and vehicles with PUC certificate will be operated only. Fugitive dust and particulates are major pollutants occurred in the mining activities. Fugitive emissions will be settled by 70- 80% by use of multiple water sprinklers. Prediction of impacts on air environment will be made with proposed production and net increase in PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} emissions at the proposed site and at the 10 km radius of study area due to mining activities.

Air pollution sources in the operating mine was classified into two categories

- i. Loading and unloading of mineral and OB, IB
- ii. Transportation on the haul road

Impact on Water Resources

Surface Water Resources

The topography of the area will not be largely changed in view of the proposed concurrent reclamation. During the mining activity period, there is a possibility of mixing of freshly disturbed material with the rain water. To take care of such happenings, retaining walls have been provided along the backfilled pits and along the soil and interburden dumps.

Groundwater Resources

The water table in hills is usually very deep and does not have any relevance with mining activities. However, concurrent restoration to original topography will not be disturbing the percolating water.

Impact on Water Quality

The impact on water quality will be confined to increased suspended solids during rain. The dumps will be secured with toe walls and rainy water will not carry significant suspended material.

Impact on Noise Levels and Ground Vibrations

With the mining operations, due to the deployment of machinery, operation for mine development, excavation and transportation of soapstone and men, it is imperative that noise levels would increase. Assessment of average logarithm night time Leq (Ln) varies from 38.3 to 55.7 dB (A) and the average logarithm daytime Leq (Ld) varies from 49.2 to 62.3 dB (A) within the study area which is within the prescribed limit. It is also observed that these incremental noise levels will not significantly affect the existing ambient noise levels.

Impact on Soil

The environmental impacts of the mining activities on topsoil are based on the quantity of removal of topsoil and its dumping. In the present project as it is proposed to temporarily store the topsoil and use it for plantation schemes, no impact of dozing of topsoil is envisaged.

The soil erosion from overburden and interburden dumps is not envisaged in the present project, as sufficient measures as detailed in the EMP would be undertaken.

Impact on Flora and Fauna

There is no forest area in the core zone area of the lease. As the mining activity is restricted to core zone, no significant impact on the flora of the buffer zone due to the proposed mining of Soapstone is anticipated.

It is proposed to include *Alternanthera paronychioides*, *Cassia tora* and *Holoptelea integrifolia* in the plantation program as they serve as sinks for gaseous emissions. Extensive plantation comprising of pollutant resistant trees will be undertaken, which will serve not only as pollution sink but also as a noise barrier.

The incremental dust generations due to the mining operations, at the boundary of the mine lease are insignificant and it is also expected that with the adoption of mitigatory measures as suggested in EMP, the impact due to operation of the mine will be minimal on the terrestrial ecosystem and also on the adjacent forest area.

The impact on the fauna of the buffer zone due to the mining activity will be marginal. The proposed progressive plantation over a period of time will reduce the impact, if any, on the fauna.

Impact on Land Use Pattern

The proposed opencast mine will result in change the land use pattern of the ML area. The land degradation is expected during mining activities like excavation, overburden dumping, soil extraction etc. Land requirement for the project has been assessed considering functional needs.

Impact on Socio – Economic Aspects

The mine area does not cover any habitation. Hence the mining activity does not involve any displacement of human settlement. No public buildings, places, monuments etc exist within the lease area or in the vicinity. The mining operation will not disturb/ relocate any village or need resettlement. Thus no adverse impact is anticipated.

The impact of mining activity in the area is positive on the socio-economic environment of the region. The proposed Soapstone Mine will be providing employment to local population and it will be give preference to the local people whenever there is requirement of man power.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

The summary of environmental mitigation measures are given in **Table- E-5**.

Table- E-5: Proposed Environmental Mitigation Measures

Impact Predicted	Suggestive measure
Disturbance of free movement / living of wild fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness camps will be conducted for labours to make them aware about sensitivity/importance of forest life. • No tract or new road for movement of labours or vehicles be laid in reserve forest area, this will prevent forest fragmentation, encroachment and human – animal encounter. • Care will be taken that noise produced during vehicles movement for carrying ore materials are within the permissible noise level. Higher noise level in the forest area will lead to restless and failure in detection of calls of mates and young ones. • Care will be taken that no hunting of animals carried out by labours. • If wild animals are noticed crossing the core zone, it will not be disturbed at all. • Labours will not be allowed to discards food, plastic etc., which can attract animals near the core site. • Only low polluting vehicle will be allowed for carrying ore materials. All vehicles allowed in the project site

Khuldoari Baldoari Soapstone Mine (Area: 12.579 ha.) at Village Khuldoari Baldoari, Tehsil & District: Bageshwar, Uttarakhand by M/s Uttarakhand Mine Minerals.	<u>Draft EIA/EMP</u>
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	<p>area will have to provide pollution under control certificate at the end of three months.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No honk will be allowed in the forest area, noise level will be within permissible limit (silent zone-50dB during day time) as per noise pollution (regulation and control), rules, 2000, CPCB norms.
Harvesting of forest flora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No tree cutting, chopping, lumbering, uprooting of shrubs and herbs should be allowed. No piling of ore material should in the reserve forest area. Collections of economically important plants will be fully restricted.

ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES

The Soapstone has been identified based on the result of geological investigations and exploration carried out by the Geological Survey of India (GSI). The mining projects are site specific as such alternate sites were not considered.

The mine is operated by opencast cum semi-mechanized method of mining. No other alternative technologies can be used because of the hard nature of the ore. Proposed mine is using eco-friendly measures to minimize the impact of mining on the surrounding environment.

COST ESTIMATES

The details of the cost to for the Environmental Management plan for 5 years, the budget for Corporate Environmental Responsibility (CER) (per year) and year wise allocation of funds for the various activities proposed to be taken up under CSR programme has been given in **Table E-6**, **Table E-7** and **Table E-8** respectively.

Table- E-6: Budget for Environmental Management Plan

S. No.	Measures	Cost (In Rs.)
1.	Water Sprinkling for dust suppression	1,00,000
2.	Environmental Monitoring :	50,000
	(i) Ambient Air Quality Monitoring	
	(ii) Ambient Noise Monitoring	
	(iii) Water Quality Sampling & Analysis	
	(iv) Soil Quality Sampling & Analysis	
3.	Plantation of 11760 trees along with their maintenance for green belt	11,76,000
4.	Cost for Retaining wall/Toe wall	63,000
Total		13,89,000

Khuldoari Baldoari Soapstone Mine (Area: 12.579 ha.) at Village Khuldoari Baldoari, Tehsil & District: Bageshwar, Uttarakhand by M/s Uttarakhand Mine Minerals.	<u>Draft EIA/EMP</u>
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Table E-7: Budget for Corporate Environmental Responsibility (CER) (per year)

S. No.	Measures	Cost (In Rs.) (per year)
1.	Sanitation facilities	50,000
2.	Skill Development for villagers	70,000
3.	Awareness to local farmers to increase yield of crop and fodder	1,00,000
4.	Plantation in the community areas/schools and on van panchayat land of nearby villages	80,000
Total		3,00,000

Table E-8: Year wise allocation of funds for the various activities proposed to be taken up under CSR programme

S. No.	Activities	Allocation of Fund (Rs.)
1	Health Camps	70,000
2	Drinking Water Facilities	50,000
3	Maintenance of foot track	70,000
4	Donation for Temple Construction	40,000
5	Donation for cultural activities in the surrounding areas	70,000
Total		3,00,000

ADDITIONAL STUDIES

Risk Assessment and Disaster Management Plan

The complete mining operation will be carried out under the management control and direction of a qualified mine manager holding Mines Manager's Certificate of Competency. Moreover, mining staff will be sent to refresher courses from time to time to keep them updated.

Disaster Management Plan

Emergency preparedness is an important aspect in the planning of Disaster Management. Personnel would be trained suitably and prepared mentally and physically in emergency response through carefully planned, simulated procedures. Similarly, the key personnel and essential personnel shall be trained in the operations.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Public Hearing

In consonance with the EIA notification dated 14th September 2006, vide section 1 (a) related to Public Hearing, the draft EIA/EMP report shall be submitted to the Uttarakhand Environment Protection & Pollution Control Board (UEPPCB) for public hearing

PROJECT BENEFITS

The impact on the civic amenities will be substantial after the commencement of mining activities. Medical facilities will be provided in the form of first-aid facility at the mine. These medical facilities will also be available to local people in the surrounding in case of emergencies.

- Generation of employment and improved standard of living;
- Increased revenue to the State by way of royalty, taxes and duties; and
- Superior communication and transport facilities etc. The employment of local people in primary and secondary sectors of project will upgrade the prosperity of the region.

CONCLUSIONS

- The mining operations will meet the compliance requirements of MoEF & CC;
- Community impacts will be beneficial, as the project will generate significant economic benefits for the region;
- Adoption of Best Available Technology and Best Management Practices with more environmental friendly process; and
- With the effective implementation of the Environment Management Plan (EMP) during the mining activities, the proposed project can proceed without any significant negative impact on environment.