

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

## **FOR**

### **PROPOSED MINING OF SOAPSTONE**

#### **AT**

**VILLAGE LOHARKHET & DHAPOLI, TEHSIL KANDA  
DISTRICT BAGESHWAR, STATE UTTARAKHAND**

**AREA: 4.762 HA, PROPOSED CAPACITY: 17,623 TPA (MAXIMUM)**

### **PROJECT PROPONENT**

**M/S GANGANATH MINERALS  
SHRI YOGESH DHAPOLA  
VILLAGE DHAPOLI, POST KANDA,  
TEHSIL KANDA & DISTRICT BAGESHWAR,  
UTTARAKHAND**

#### **PREPARED BY**

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(Accredited by NABET (Quality Council of India)

For EIA studies as 'A' Category Consultant

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Purpose of the Report**

M/s Ganganath Minerals proposes the Soapstone Mine extending over an area of 4.762 ha [17,623 TPA (maximum) of Soapstone] in Village Loharkhet & Dhapoli, Tehsil Kanda & District Bageshwar, Uttarakhand. The proposal for TOR was considered in its meeting dated 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2021 and since the project is greater than 5 ha and it comes under category B1 therefore comprehensive EIA report shall be prepared. 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 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2006 and amended thereof, for seeking environmental clearance for mining of soapstone in the applied mining lease area.

#### **1.2 Identification of Project & Project Proponent**

##### **1.2.1 Identification of Project**

The project is being proposed by M/s Ganganath Minerals. The address of the proponent is given below:

M/s Ganganath Minerals  
(Partner - Talla-Dhapoli, Post-Kanda, Tehsil- Kanda & District Bageshwar, Uttarakhand)

The proponent has applied for environmental clearance for mining lease in the name of Soapstone Mining Project over an area of 4.762 ha at Village Loharkhet & Dhapoli, Tehsil Kanda & District Bageshwar, State Uttarakhand.

##### **1.2.2 Project Proponent**

M/s Ganganath Minerals mine is a private company. The proposed Soapstone Mine extends over an area of 4.762 Ha (17623 TPA (maximum) of Soapstone) in Village Loharkhet & Dhapoli, Tehsil Kanda & District Bageshwar, State Uttarakhand. The LOI of proposed Soapstone Mine was granted in favour of M/s Ganganath Minerals for period of 25 years by the Govt. of Uttarakhand. The proposed rate of production is 17,623 TPA (maximum) of soapstone. The estimated project cost is Rs 15.0 lakhs. The expected life of mine is 25 years.

##### **Address of the applicant**

M/s Ganganath Minerals  
(Partner - Talla-Dhapoli, Post-Kanda, Tehsil- Kanda & District Bageshwar, Uttarakhand)

## 2.0 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

### 2.1 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 4.762 ha, for the production of 17,623 TPA of soapstone.

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

### 2.2 Size of the Project

The proposed Soapstone mining project extends over an area of 4.762 ha with the target maximum production capacity of mine is about 17,623 TPA (maximum) of Soapstone.

### 2.3 Anticipated Life of Project and Cost of the Project

The projected life of the mine is 25 years. The cost of the project is about Rs. 15.0 lakhs.

### 2.4 Location of the Project

The proposed Soapstone Mine lease comes under Village Loharkhet & Dhapoli, Tehsil Kanda & District Bageshwar, State Uttarakhand. Geo-graphically the ML area extends from Latitude 29° 49' 07.3011" to 29° 49' 24.6001" and longitude 79° 52' 35.9969" to 79° 52' 40.9663. The area falls in Survey of India topo sheet No. 53 O/13.

## 2.5 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### 2.5.1 Salient Features of Mine Lease

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

**Table 1: Salient Features of mine lease area**

Sr. No.	Particular	Details
<b>A.</b>	Nature of the Project	Soapstone Mining
1.	ML Area	4.762 Ha.
2.	Proposed Production Capacity	Total Recoverable Quantity of Soapstone: 17623 Tonnes/ Annum (Maximum) (As per approved Mining Closure Plan)
3.	Lease Period of Mine	Lease was granted for a period of 25 Years.
<b>C.</b>	<b>Method of Mining</b>	
1.	Method	Open-Cast semi-mechanized Mining
2.	Blasting / Drilling	Not proposed
<b>D.</b>	<b>Project Location</b>	
1.	Village	Loharkhet & Dhapoli
2.	Tehsil	Kanda

<b>M/s Ganganath Minerals: Mining of soapstone from Lease Area (4.762 ha.) at Village Loharkhet &amp; Dhapoli, Tehsil Kanda &amp; District Bageshwar, State Uttarakhand</b>	<b><u>Executive Summary</u></b>
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3.	District	Bageshwar
4.	State	Uttarakhand
5.	Topo Sheet No.	53O/13
6.	Lease Area Coordinates	Latitude 29° 49' 07.3011" to 29° 49' 24.6001" and longitude 79° 52' 35.9969" to 79° 52' 40.9663".
<b>E.</b>	<b>Cost Details</b>	
1.	Project Cost	Rs. 15 Lac
<b>F.</b>	<b>Water Demand</b>	
1.	Requirement	7.0 KLD
2.	Source of water	Nearby villages & natural springs.
<b>G.</b>	Man Power Requirement	82
<b>H.</b>	<b>Environmental Setting</b>	
1.	Nearest Village	Loharkhet, 200 m (Aerial)
2.	Nearest Town	Bageshwar, 11 Km (Aerial)
3.	Nearest National / State Highway	Kanda Jethai Road, 400 m (Aerial)
4.	Nearest Railway Station	Kathgodam, 70 Km (Aerial)
5.	Nearest Airport	Pithoragarh, 43 Km (Aerial)
6.	Ecological Sensitive Areas (National Park, Wild Life Sanctuaries, Biosphere Reserve etc.) within 10 km radius	Soudhar Reserve Forest- 1500 m
7.	Water bodies within 10 km radius of the mine site.	Saryu River – 7 km (Aerial)
8.	Archaeological Important Place	None
9.	Seismic Zone	V

### 2.5.2 Mine Development and Production

The mining will be done semi-mechanized way in open cast method in quite a systematic manner by forming 6m 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 2** below:

**Table 2: Year wise Production of Soapstone Mine**

Years	Saleable soapstone (Tonnes)
1st	12453
2nd	13362
3rd	14177
4th	16388

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<b>5th</b>	<b>17623</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>74003</b>

The quantity of soil, Overburden from pit to be generated during next five years is given in **Table 3** below:

**Table 3: Quantity of Top Soil and Overburden of Soapstone Mine**

<b>Years</b>	<b>Top Soil (cum)</b>	<b>Overburden soil (cum)</b>
<b>1st</b>	2200	29058
<b>2nd</b>	2106	31180
<b>3rd</b>	2382	33077
<b>4th</b>	3137	38240
<b>5th</b>	2775	41119
<b>Total</b>	<b>12600</b>	<b>172674</b>

### **2.5.3 Method of Mining**

The mining will be carried out in two pits and will be open cast semi-mechanized method in quite a systematic manner. The mining benches will be formed along the contours, the height of the benches will be kept of 3m and width more than 4m initially to facilitate separation of soapstone and remove the mineral and interburden and soil by mules. The mule track of 3-4m width with a gradient of 1 in 3 to 1 in 4 will be made. The mineral will be transported by mules to the road point. So that the mineral can be loaded on to the trucks for further transportation to Haldwani. All the benches will be connected by mule track, so that mule can reach to the working faces the slope of the benches will be kept 70° but for exploitation of mineral benches will be steepened and width will be reduced and average slope of the faces will be kept 65°-70°.

### **2.5.4 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. During the next five years mining, 1.6153 ha land will be degraded due to mining & allied activities.

#### **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, van panchayat land etc. in consultation with the local DFO/Agriculture department. The details of the year wise plantation have been shown in **Table 4**.

**Table 4: Year wise Afforestation scheduled**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Area (ha)</b>	<b>No of saplings</b>
First year	1.00	1000
Second year	1.00	1000
Third year	1.00	1000
Fourth year	1.00	1000
Fifth year	1.00	1000
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>5000</b>

## **2.6 LAND USE PATTERN**

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

## **2.7 BASELINE ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS**

### **2.7.1 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 µmhos/cm. Based on the results, it is evident that the soils are not contaminated by any polluting sources.

### **2.7.2 Meteorology**

Meteorological data at the site was monitored during December 2020 to February 2021 representing winter season.

### **2.7.3 Ambient Air Quality**

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 36.2 µg/m<sup>3</sup> to 79.3 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. The minimum and maximum level of PM2.5 recorded within the study area was in the range of 12.4 µg/m<sup>3</sup> to 38.5 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. The minimum and maximum concentration of SO<sub>2</sub> recorded within the study area was 5.0 to 9.6µg/m<sup>3</sup>. The minimum and maximum level of NO<sub>2</sub> recorded within the study area was in the range of was 7.3 µg/m<sup>3</sup> to 19.2 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. The results thus obtained indicate that the concentrations of PM10, PM2.5, SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub> in the Ambient Air are well within the National Ambient Air Quality (NAAQ) standards for Industrial, Residential, Rural and other areas.

#### 2.7.4 Water Quality

To assess the physical and chemical properties of water in the region, ground water samples from 5 locations and surface water samples from 2 locations were collected from various water sources around the mine lease area.

- During the study period, the pH was varying for ground water from 7.36 to 7.86 and the surface water are 7.28 to 7.37. The pH values for all the samples collected in the study area during study period were found to be within the limits.
- In ground water samples collected from the study area, the total dissolved solids in ground water are varying from 196.4 mg/l to 412.34 mg/l whereas in surface water varying from 186.98 mg/l to 190.16 mg/l. The TDS of the samples were within the desirable limit of 500 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, in surface water samples 16.8 mg/l to 17.9 mg/l. The chloride samples are within the desirable limits.
- In the ground water samples collected from the study area, the hardness is varying from 182.44 mg/l to 288.2 mg/l, in surface water samples 187.14 mg/l to 189.12 mg/l.

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

#### 2.7.5 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.

#### 2.7.6 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.

#### 2.7.7 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.

### **3.0 ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

#### **3.1 Impact on Air Quality**

Soapstone mine where PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> will be the main pollutants generated in mining activities. The emissions of Sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), Nitrogen Oxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) 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 PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> 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

#### **3.2 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.

#### **3.3 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.

#### **3.4 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. It is also observed that these incremental noise levels will not significantly affect the existing ambient noise levels.

#### **3.5 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.

### **3.6 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.

### **3.7 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.

### **3.8 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.

## **4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN**

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

**Table 5: Proposed Environmental Mitigation Measures**

<b>Impact Predicted</b>	<b>Suggestive measure</b>
Disturbance of free movement / living of wild fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awareness camps will be conducted for labours to make them aware about sensitivity/importance of</li> </ul>

	<p>forest life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Care will be taken that no hunting of animals carried out by labours.</li> <li>• If wild animals are noticed crossing the core zone, it will not be disturbed at all.</li> <li>• Labours will not be allowed to discards food, plastic etc., which can attract animals near the core site.</li> <li>• Only low polluting vehicle will be allowed for carrying ore materials. All vehicles allowed in the project site area will have to provide pollution under control certificate at the end of three months.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
<p>Harvesting of forest flora</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No tree cutting, chopping, lumbering, uprooting of shrubs and herbs should be allowed.</li> <li>• No pilling of ore material should in the reserve forest area.</li> <li>• Collections of economically important plants will be fully restricted.</li> </ul>

## **5.0 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.

## 6.0 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-6**, **Table 7** and **Table 8** respectively.

**Table 6: Budget for Environmental Management Plan**

S. No.	Measures	Cost (In Rs.)
1.	Water Sprinkling for dust suppression	50,000
2.	Environmental Monitoring : (i) Ambient Air Quality Monitoring (ii) Ambient Noise Monitoring (iii) Water Quality Sampling & Analysis (iv) Soil Quality Sampling & Analysis	1,00,000
3.	Plantation of 5000 trees along with their maintenance for green belt	5,00,000
4.	Cost for Retaining wall/Toe wall	74,700
<b>Total</b>		<b>7,24,700</b>

**Table 7: Budget for Corporate Environmental Responsibility (CER) (per year)**

S. No.	Measures	Cost (In Rs.) (per year)
1.	Sanitation facilities	25,000
2.	Skill Development for villagers	20,000
3.	Awareness to local farmers to increase yield of crop and fodder	15,000
4.	Plantation in the community areas/schools and on van panchayat land of nearby villages	40,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,00,000</b>

**Table 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	25,000
2	Drinking Water Facilities	15,000
3	Maintenance of foot track	25,000
4	Donation for Temple Construction	15,000
5	Donation for cultural activities in the surrounding areas	20,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,00,000</b>

## **7.0 ADDITIONAL STUDIES**

### **7.1 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.

### **7.2 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.

## **8.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

### **8.1 Public Hearing**

In consonance with the EIA notification dated 14<sup>th</sup> 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

## **9.0 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.

## **10.0 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.