

# **Mining Tenement**

To induct modern methodology to establish an equitable and transparent regulatory framework in the mining sector, the government has started the spadework to develop a “mining tenement system”. Union mines ministry plans to place a transparent system to account records of freehold and leasehold land across the country, in collaboration with the state governments. It is an initiative to account and record freehold and leasehold areas across the country to facilitate investment. A record of area that is under any reconnaissance permit (RP), prospecting license (PL) or mining lease (ML) will be ascertained under the system. Tenement system will also check violation of mining laws as the sector has witnessed many controversies on the grant of mining lease by state governments.

The term Mining Tenement applies to various types of reserved land and provide that mining (which is defined under the Act to include fore seeking, prospecting, exploring for minerals, and mining operations) cannot be carried out without the prior written consent of the State Government jointly with IBM. This consent can only be given after consultation with the responsible Minister and the vested authority.

While determining applications for mineral tenure to impose a “no mining” condition in respect to the reserved lands where 50% or less of the land applied for is affected by reserved lands and the applicant has not specifically requested authority to explore/prospect the reserved land. Timeframes will depend upon the type of reserve land affected, the degree of justification expected and relevant constraints faced by the responsible Ministers. The national inventory of mineral resources will be based on a comprehensive and up to date review of exploration data. In co-ordination with Geological Survey of India, the Indian Bureau of Mines will maintain a database in digitized form comprising both a Resource Inventory and a Tenement Registry. The resource inventory will be in accordance with the latest version of the UNFC system showing reserves and remaining resources as well in the traditional IBM form of resources and probable and proven reserves. The Tenement Registry will give information of both Leasehold Areas as well as Freehold Areas in terms of green field, brown field and relinquished areas including areas given up by the GSI and other RP/ML holders as not pursued. The data would be maintained on-line giving instant information to prospective investors on what is available for reconnaissance, prospecting and

mining. Summaries of work done by public agencies will be kept in the form of meta-data in the public domain and detailed reports will be made available to interested investors on cost recovery basis. The Data filing requirements will be rigorously applied and all concession holders will be subjected to detailed monitoring in this regard. The lock-in arrangements will be assured and released data will be integrated with the data generated by the state agencies and made available to other prospectors.

This system will ensure that all the stakeholders — state governments, Geological Survey of India (GSI) and mining companies seeking mineral blocks — have access to relevant information on mineral blocks. This computerized online registration of mining tenement system will kick-start all reforms in the mining sector. This is a step towards institutionalizing a transparent framework for allocating mines and avoiding disputes.