

# GOA TAMNAR TRANSMISSION LINE TOOLKIT

## What's going on | Details of the transmission line projects

Laying of LILO of one CKT of Narendra (existing) – Narendra (new) 400 kV D/C quad transmission line at Xeldem

The 400 KV Goa-Tamnar transmission<sup>1</sup> line project (a SPV of Sterlite Power) is a **power project that threatens forest areas** (Goa's largest protected area – Mollem National Park and Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary and private land-holdings of non-forest areas in Goa (Fig. 1).

The Goa-Tamnar Transmission Line project consists of four components within Goa:

- Three transmission lines
  - LILO Narendra Line
  - Xeldem-Xeldem
  - Xeldem-Mapusa

- One sub-station in Sangod Village

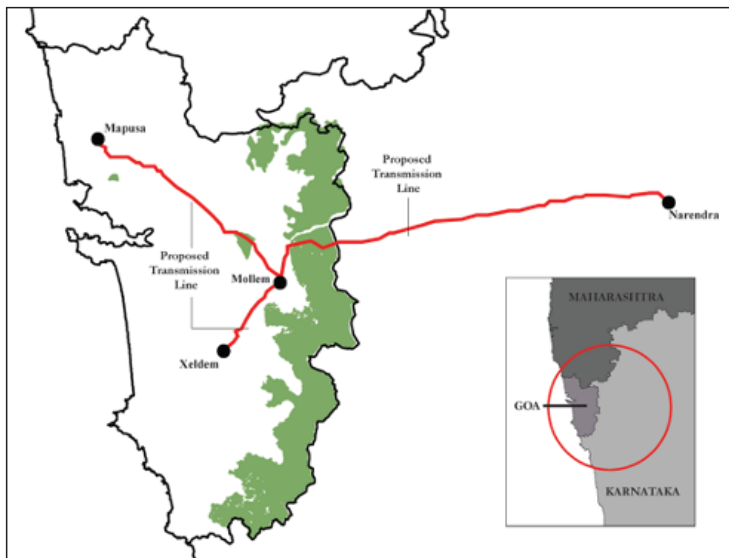
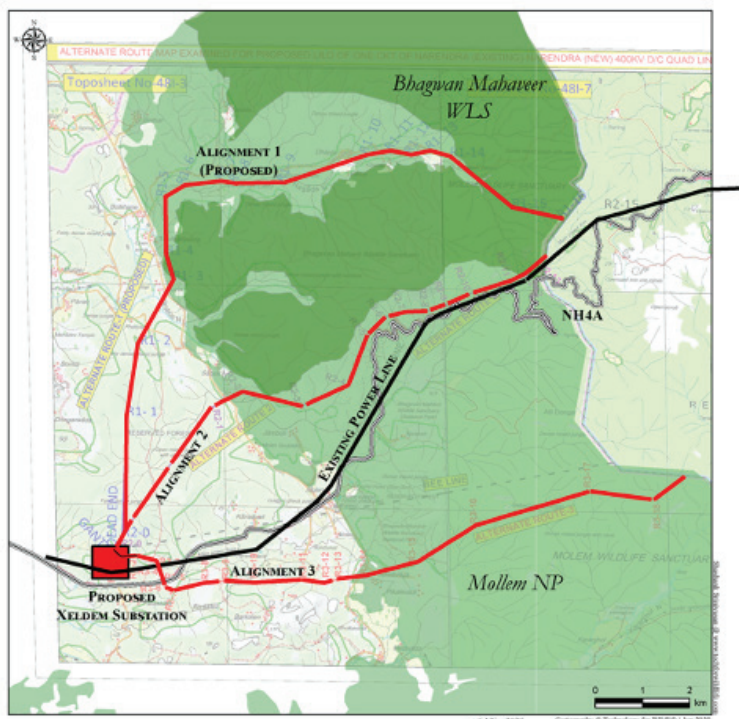


Fig.1: Map of transmission line from Goa to Karnataka passing through the Western Ghats. (Source: Technology for Wildlife)

The User Agency has applied for as many as **four forest diversion proposals** in a piecemeal manner bifurcating the **four components of a single project**. A fifth forest diversion proposal (FP/KA/TRANS/37754/2018) for laying LILO of one ckt of Narendra(existing)-Narendra (New) 400 kV D/C quad transmission line has been applied for in Karnataka.

Thus, there are **5 forest diversion proposals for one single project** involving **diversion of total 323.596 ha of forest land** through the State of Goa (146.505 ha) and State of Karnataka (177.091 ha). This transmission line will pass through multiple districts and states, and several forest officers from Karnataka have gone on record relaying their concerns related to the **depletion of forest cover, thus highlighting the broader regional concerns of this power projects**.



Map of transmission lines passing through the Western Ghats. Source: Technology for Wildlife

With respect to Mollem National Park and Bhagwan Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary, about **3.15 km of the transmission line is proposed to be constructed through the Bhagwan Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary**.

This project could be part of a larger projects, where **multiple forest clearance proposals were submitted within the State of Goa**.

### Who is Goa Tamnar?

- How are they related to large corporate houses
- Why have they been given police protection?

**Goa Tamnar is a Special Purpose Vehicle of Sterlite Power**. Sterlite Power is a wholly owned subsidiary of Volcan Holdings, which is also a majority shareholder of Vedanta Resources Plc, and Sterlite Technologies Limited.

In Goa, **police protection** was given to Sterlite Power as **early as February, 2019** before this project was even approved (7th of April, 2020), until its finalisation.

1 - <https://www.sterlitepower.com/project/goa-tamnar-transmission-project-limited>

2 - <https://www.sterlitepower.com/sites/default/files/jobs/downloads/Role-Spec-Head-OSM.pdf>

## WHAT IS STERLITE'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD IN OTHER PLACES IN INDIA?

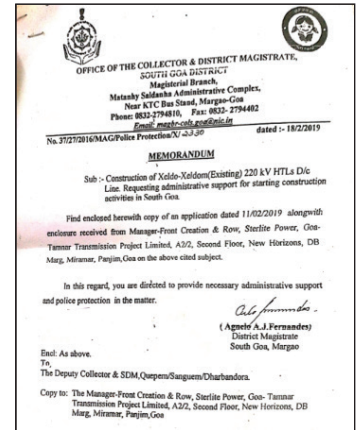
Sterlite managed to get a foothold in Tamil Nadu's Thoothukudi in 1994. This was after facing rejection in Ratnagiri, Maharashtra, due to the **high level of degradation it would cause to the region's fragile coastal environment.**

In August 1994, the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) issued a No Objection Certificate (NOC) to Sterlite. **They were asked to conduct an Environment Impact Assessment.** The NOC stipulated that the factory should be located 25km from the Gulf of Mannar given its ecological sensitivity.

**This condition was violated and the factory was built 14 km from the Gulf of Mannar.** Agitation by locals opposing Sterlite was met with repression from police officers and the district administration alike.

**What follows is a series of health and environment hazards:**

1. **Violated the condition stipulated in the NOC given by the TNPCB** that the unit should be located 25 km from the Gulf of Mannar. The factory was built 14 km from the Gulf of Mannar.
2. **Ignored the condition stipulated in the license** to operate given by the TNPCB that a 25 km green belt should be constructed around the factory.
3. Was responsible for a number of gas leaks (as reported by NEERI) which **caused several health hazards.**
4. **Produced products it was not authorized to** and manufactured more than double of the permitted capacity.
5. Contaminated the groundwater with arsenic, lead, selenium, arsenic, aluminium and copper.
6. May have tampered with online air monitors (NEERI).
7. Constructed several plants mentioned in the proposed expansion plan before receiving construction licenses.
8. A health study commissioned by Sterlite on the directions of the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board found the presence of brain tumors in men in the surrounding areas to be 1,000 times the national incidence rate. A little over 12% of total deaths in the study population were attributed to nervous diseases. Unaccounted mercury emissions into the environment by Sterlite was presumed to be responsible for this.
9. Responsible for the massive gas leak on March 23, 2013. Several people complained of eye irritation, coughing, miscarriages, severe discomfort. Recorded levels of Sulphur Dioxide were 3 times the permissible limit.
10. Open firing by police on people demanding the closure of Sterlite. A total of 13 people were killed and the incident was named "The Thoothukudi massacre". Hundreds were injured and more succumbed to injuries in the following days.



Police protection given to Goa Tamnar and Sterlite Power



## TIMELINE OF LACK OF WHITE-PAPERS BY GOA GOVERNMENT

**23rd October, 2018:** Nilesh Cabral states that he would release a white-paper within 45 days on the electricity department. Briefly alludes to Public-Private Partnerships and gradual power hike in tariff.

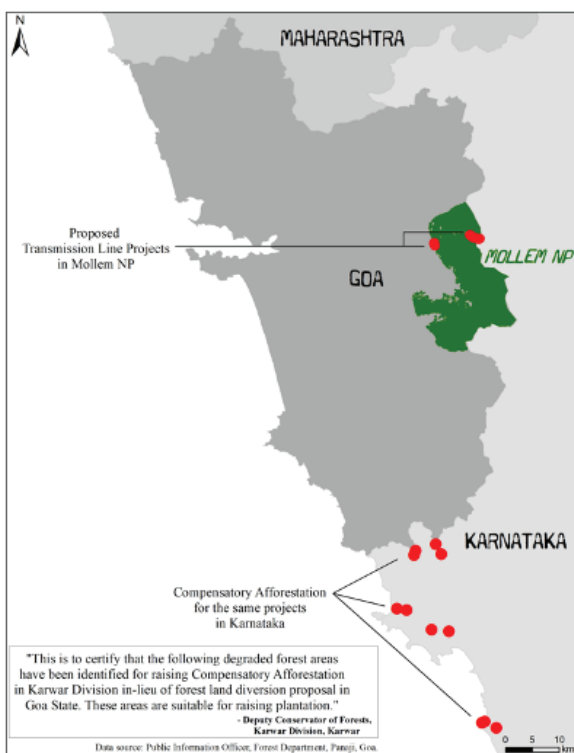
**16th January, 2019:** Cabral states electricity department is “defunct” due to which he is not able to provide white paper on its functioning. “I had told that I would be giving a white paper (on the functioning of the department). But I can’t give it. The department is defunct, I have to see what we can do to revive the department”.

**21st October, 2020:** Goa’s power and environment minister Nilesh Cabral released a white-paper on Goa’s power consumption.

Is it wrong to assume that this has been issued as a quick response to the opposition against the 400kv transmission line to be laid by Goa Tamnar, a private company?

In addition to this, Mr. Cabral is seen to have released false data on Goa’s electricity consumption in the white paper stating that, **“Historically, the load requirement for domestic consumers in Goa is more than double the load requirements of both commercial and industrial consumers put together.”**<sup>3</sup>

**This is however a false statement as the 19th EPS documents clearly show that in the Electricity Demand Projections for Goa for the year 2021 -2022, industrial and commercial consumers will use 3122 MU (Million Units) of power as compared to just 1280 MU (Million Units) by domestic consumers.** In percentages this means that domestic consumption is just 26.91 % whereas the commercial and industrial consumption is 65.63%. The rest 7.46% accounts for public lighting irrigation etc. In short **the projected industrial and commercial consumption estimates are 2.4 times the domestic consumption.** The figures clearly show that Mr. Cabral has blatantly lied to the public. Why is the Power and Environment Minister allowed to make these false statements?



Red dots indicating the compensatory afforestation sites in Karwar for three projects within Mollem.

## CONCERNS ABOUT THE GOA TAMNAR, STERLITE POWER PROJECT

### 1. ECOLOGICAL

On the 18th June, 2020 letter to the Central Empowered Committee written by 150 scientists (referred to Agenda item 57.3.2 w.r.t. to Transmission Line of the National Board for Wildlife). If an EIA report has been submitted, it is not accessible in public domain and **members of the State Wildlife Advisory Board were not given an EIA to scrutinise for both projects before the meeting.** There is a lack of clarity on the number of trees that the user agency is permitted to fell, as per the minutes of the State Board for Wildlife and National Board for Wildlife. **The decision taken by the members therefore, cannot be said to be an informed decision.** It is unclear how all the equipment and machinery required to erect these large towers carrying high tension cables will be taken to the site with minimum damage, given that the area is only currently accessible by foot.

The minutes of the meeting of the State Board for Wildlife held on 02 December 2019, mentions that “the Biodiversity Impact Assessment studies and Biodiversity Management Plan has been prepared by ERM India Pvt. Ltd, Gurgaon has been submitted”. The copy of the same is not available in the public domain.

There are **larger and unstudied effects of transmission lines on volant mammals** such as Bats and Flying Squirrels, or on arboreal species such as the Slender Loris, Giant Squirrel, Bonnet Macaque, and Grey Langur. For example, due to the absence of tree cover along transmission lines, arboreal mammals such as Lorises are sometimes forced to use electric wires of power lines to cross, causing mortality due to electrocution. **The project requires a clearance for 35 years, during which there will be regular tree cutting below the transmission line.** This is especially concerning given that the project cuts through the protected area.

## 2. PEOPLE CONCERNS

### **Police protection:**

Why is the government in a hurry to collaborate with Sterlite Power (a subsidiary of Vedanta) when it is not clear that citizens have been taken on board and these projects were passed during the lockdown (7th of April, 2020). The Deputy Collector and District Magistrate in Goa provided protection as early as February, 2019 before this project was even approved (7th of April, 2020) and until its finalisation.

### **No Gram Sabha:**

Meeting minutes indicate that a majority of panch members have asked for Gram Sabha on 4th October, 2020. However without a Gram Sabha they issued the licence on the 5th October. The Panchayat Secretary has not signed the license along with the Sarpanch. Many points mentioned are related to constructing a residential unit and need to be scrutinised further to understand the legality of whether they can construct a power substation with the same license.

## 3. NO DUE PROCESS: PUBLIC INTEREST AND SECTION-144

As per the Indian Express report, the tree felling permission for the substation (dtd. 29th April, 2019 for clearing the substation area in Sangod for 2671 trees over an area of 12ha). Private land of Goa Tamnar bought for construction of the sub station is supposedly granted under section 31 of the Goa Tree Preservation Act, 1984. This gives them an exemption from following the provision of the Act as it is done in public interest. What is the great public interest in a sub station? If so, then why is the government restricting people with section 144?

In addition to this, the project is in violation of a Supreme Court order. The Supreme Court of India in 2015 ordered that "No Objection Certificate(s)" will not be issued in Goa for the conversion of any land of over 1 hectare that has natural vegetation with tree canopy density in excess of 0.1. Since the area of land cleared for the substation in Sangod is 11.8 hectares and the canopy density of the area is 0.7, this is a violation of the above Supreme Court Order.

## 4. RIGHT TO KNOW

Since this Tree felling permission was not in public domain, people lost their right to appeal against it within 30 days from the grant of such permission. This amounts to cheating the public as this infringes the "RIGHT TO KNOW" which is also our fundamental right under the Constitution.

## 5. NOTHING IN PUBLIC DOMAIN AND NO WORK ORDERS:

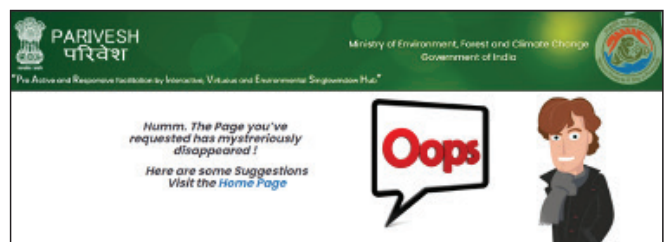
If the State issued work orders under section 2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 to give effect to the stage-1 forest clearance granted by the MoEF on 29th April, 2020 for Xeldem-Xeldem line, Xeldem-Mapusa line and approach road to the substation. This document again has not been put on the state Forest Departments website.

## 6. LAND GRABBING

Sterlite is a business that will be selling electricity to the State of Goa. This business will be using the land in the protected area to pass its transmission line through. In normal circumstances Sterlite would have to spend a significant amount of money buying the land on which it is to set up its business activities but in this case all it needs is four signatures from the State Government to take over the land for free. Why is a company allowed to have access of Goa's natural heritage for free? Isn't this the height of land grabbing?

### **Oops, Proposals Mysteriously Disappeared from**

**Parivesh:** The forest clearance proposals with all relevant information (2 transmission line and approach road to substation) for which stage-1 forest clearance are granted on 29th April, 2020 were on MOEF's web portal PARIVESH but it has now "mysteriously disappeared".



**KINDLY USE THE RESOURCES BELOW TO GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES CONCERNING THE THREE PROJECTS IN MOLLEM.**

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## INSTAGRAM

### MLA'S ON INSTAGRAM

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Calangute: @michaellobo76  
Porvorim: @rohankhaunteofficial  
Aldona: @officialglennticlo  
Panaji: @babushmonserrateofficial

Taleigao: @jennifermonserrateofficial  
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St. Andre: @francisosilveira.mla  
Cumbarjua: @pandurangmadkaikar  
Mayem: @zantyepravin  
Sanquelim: @drpramodpsawant  
Valpoi: @visrane  
Priol: @govindforgo

Shiroda: @subhashshirodkr  
Marmugao: @milindnaikofficial  
Vasco da Gama: @jlcarnosalmeida  
Dabolim: @mauvingodinho  
Fatorda: @vijai\_sardesai  
Margao: @digambarvkamat  
Quepem: @babukavlekar

# FACEBOOK

## MLA'S ON FACEBOOK TO ASK THEM QUESTIONS

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Quepem: @BabuKavlekar  
Pernem: @ajgaonkarbabu  
Curtorim: @aleixoreginaldolourenco  
Valpoi: @visrane  
Calangute: @michaellobo76  
Porvorim: @RohanKhaunte  
Taleigao: @JenniferMonserrateOfficial  
Mapusa: @joshuadesouzaofficial  
Saligao: @jayeshvsal  
Aldona: @OfficialGlennTiclo  
Panjim: @babushmonserrateofficial  
St. Andre: @silvierafrancsico  
Priol: @GovindForGoa  
Marcaim: @SudinDhavalikar  
Marmugao: @BJP4Mormugao  
Vasco Da Gama: @carlosalmeidagoa  
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Cortalim: @alina4bjp  
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Margao: @digambarvkamat  
Benaulim: @Churchillalemaos  
Navelim: @luizinho.faleiro.9  
Cuncolim: @CuncolimMLAClafacioDias  
Sanvordem: @Deepak.Pauskar.9  
Mandrem: @dayanand.sopte  
Bicholim: @rajesh.patnekar.7  
Tivim: @nilkant.halarnkar  
Cumbarjua: @profile.php?id=100015370176082  
(Pandurang Madkaikar)  
Maem: @pravin.zantye  
Shiroda: @subhashshirodkargoa  
Quepem: @chandrakant.kavlekar  
Sanguem: @prasad.gaonkar.35

## Other Facebook handles relevant to Goa

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@AAPGoa  
@GoaPMC  
@GoaPradeshYouthCongressOfficial  
@GoaForwardParty  
@GirishChodankarGoa  
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@iValmikiNaik  
@narendraksawaikar  
@varad.mardolkar

# TWITTER

## TWITTER HANDLES TO ASK YOUR MLA'S QUESTIONS

@goacm  
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@BabuKavlekar  
@dycmogo  
@BabuAjgaonkar  
@ReginaldoGoa  
@visrane  
@RohanKhaunte  
@MauvinGodinho  
@VijaiSardesai  
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@MardolkarVarad