

Stakeholder Consultation – Construction & Operation of Kaiha 2 Hydropower Project in Lofa County

Meeting: Construction & Operation of Kaiha 2 Hydropower Project in Lofa County

Date: March 16, 2016

Venue: Bolahun Town

Attendants:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Town/ Organization</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Contact</i>
Jallah Folien	Bolahan	General Town Chief	0880392229
Norria Ndorlar	Honayohun	Town Chief	
Armah Kanneh	Fangonda	Town Chief	0886630719
Flomo Jallah	Bolahun	Elder	
Oman Kpaku	Bolahun	Elder	
Momo Dunor	Korworhun	Deputy Town Chief	0886464495
Mohamed Kamara	Sosomolahun	Town Chief	0888083131
Salia Dunor	Bolahun	Elder	0886659630
Patrick K. Ndorbor	Ngahama	Town Chief	
Daniel K. Ballah Sr.	Toingihewa	Town Chief	0888671535
Moses Janga	Twingihewa	Town Chief	0880369280
Jame Morries	Bolahun		0886372326
Boakai Ngafua	Bolahun		
James Fakorna	Twingihewa	Elder Chief	0886282589
Joseph Ndorbor	Bolahun		
Bendu Kanneh	Bolahun	Market woman	0880392228
Korpo Blama	Bolahun	Market woman	
Gambo	Bolahun	Market Woman	0880396378
Janga Blama	Bolahun		0888951322
Tangoma Tula	Bolahun	Youth	
Setay Harris	Bolahun	Youth	0880771961
Korpo Jallah	Bolahun	Market woman	
Siafia Varfee	Kimbolahun	Deputy Town Chief	08860599660
Boki Kamara	Bolahun	Town chief	0888952112
Jusu B. Konneh	Massambolahun	Town Chief	0880426807
J.Vincent Fialoy	Ministry of Agriculture (MOA)	TCO	0886365685 0775296627
Abraham Bility	Rural and Renewable Energy Agency (RREA)	Social Development Officer	0886621340
Williette T.Clarke	Earthtime	Administrative Assistant	0880556677 0777399999
Jorn Stave	Multiconsult	ESIA Team Leader	0888392613
Basma Shamas	Earthtime	Environmental Consultant	0888300766

Summary:

A meeting was held between the chiefs of Bolahun, Honayohun, Fangonda, Korworhun, Sosomolahun, Ngahama, Twingihewa, Toingihewa Kimbolahun, and Massambolahun towns, some community members of Bolahun Town and representatives of Liberia's Rural & Renewable Energy Agency (RREA), Multiconsult (project engineers and environmental consultant) and Earthtime (environmental consultant) to present and discuss the construction and operation of a mini hydropower station at Kaiha 2 location in Lofa County. The discussion included a brief presentation of the project location and components as well as the probable environmental and social impacts that might arise from the project and the concerns and opinions that the communities might have regarding the project. The presentation and discussion was translated by locals to local dialects to ensure that all the attendees are well informed.

Presentation:

Abraham Bility (RREA) and Jorn Stave (ESIA Team Leader) introduced the project and provided a brief description of the project component and location, the steps that were done so far to assess and choose the location, the towns that might benefit from the current and probable environmental and social impacts arising from project activities.

Questions and Concerns Session:

The purpose of this section is to focus on the questions, concerns and comments on the different aspects of the project that were discussed in the meeting.

The attendees welcomed the team and expressed their happiness regarding this project and the development that it will bring to the area if implemented.

The following questions were raised and discussed during the meeting:

- **Will the communities be paying for the current?**

Abraham Bility (RREA Representative) explained that current will come at a cost and that the receivers would be paying for the electricity they will use ; however the cost would be lower than the electricity generated using fuel oil.

- **What is the size of the area used around the poles?**

Jorn Stave (ESIA Team Leader) explained that poles will have a 2x2m foundation and will be 12 m high. However, the transmission line will need a corridor of 20 m on both sides to be cleared to ensure safety and maintenance/ rehabilitation space.

- **Structures, crops, cultural sites and land issues along the transmission line route:**

Questions were raised regarding the procedure that will be in place in case the transmission line crosses structures, coffee/cocoa gardens or other crops.

Jorn Stave (ESIA Team Leader) explained that the transmission line route will be planned along the right of way (ROW) of the road. Usually main roads have a ROW

that extends 75 feet from the center of the road in each direction. The exact size of the right of way differ based on the classification of the road and will be confirmed with the Ministry of Public Works. The ROW is usually left clear (no structures or crops should exist) to enable rehabilitation and development along the roads. Usually, structures or crops within the ROW are not entitled for compensations; however, depending on the funding agency of the projects, agreements might be reached and crops might be compensated.

Jorn explained that the implementation of the project will depend on its feasibility, and high resettlement and compensation costs will decrease the feasibility of the project. For this reason, the transmission line route will be selected carefully to avoid crossing structures, which will reduce the cost of resettlement and make the project more feasible. The route will be mainly adjacent to the main road and within its right of way; however, if structures are in close proximity to the main road, the transmission line route might be diverted as much as possible to a location where it does not cross any structure.

If the transmission line crosses a cocoa/ coffee garden or other permanent crops, a portion of the garden might be brushed. Discussions and agreements with the communities will be made to provide a fair compensation that does not reduce the feasibility of the project.

If the line crosses a temporary crop, the towns will be notified ahead of time and the project will wait for the harvest of the crops before using the land.

In this regard, the town chiefs agreed that crops and compensations should not stand in the way of development projects that the area need and will benefit from and they advised that they will be ready to negotiate and make the right decisions and even give away these crops even without compensations because their towns support and are in need for development and will cooperate so that the project can be implemented.

In addition, the attendees confirmed that some traditional sites and women bushes are located in close proximity to the road. During implementation, the contractors should consult with the town chiefs to locate these areas and try to avoid crossing through them; however, the attendees also showed willingness to relocate these sites if needed.

- **Will it be possible to extend a town in case the transmission line was diverted from the main road and crossed behind it?**

Jorn Stave (ESIA Team Leader) confirmed that the town can still be extended and that the community members will have to avoid the transmission line corridor (app. 20m) only.

- **What is the expected timeline of the project and when will it start?**

The ESIA Team explained that the environmental assessment for the site is currently being conducted. This phase will take approximately 3 months. Once completed the project owner will be looking for donors to fund the implementation. Few donors

expressed interest in funding the project and there is a good chance they will proceed with funding. Once funding is secured the project will start and the construction phase will take approximately 2 years. During these 2 years current will not be available yet but other benefits like employment opportunities will be available. After the construction phase is completed, the operation phase will start and current will be generated.

The operation phase does not have a specific timeline and the hydropower plant will be operating as long as it is maintained properly.

- **Where will the transmission line ends? Why was the location of Kaiha 2 chosen for the project and what were the criteria for the selection of the transmission line route and towns to be supplied?**

Jorn stave ((ESIA Team Leader) explained that 3 locations on the kaiha river were assessed and Kaiha 2 was found to be the most feasible location for the project. The other 2 locations might be developed at later stages through other projects.

Jorn also explained that the main target of the project is to provide current to the 3 big cities of Voinjama, Kolahun and Foya being the cities with the highest demand. The transmission line route was chosen based on the most feasible route to reach these 3 cities. The power plant is expected to generate electricity that can cover more towns and that's why the project will try to connect as many towns along the transmission line route as possible. The project cannot supply the towns away from the main road or transmission line route because the cost of installing transmission lines to supply these towns is very high and beyond the budget of this project.

- **Employment opportunities and gender equality during the project construction phase:**

The attendees asked if they will be benefiting from the project during construction phase. They were also concerned regarding gender equality and employment for women.

The team explained that skilled and semi-skilled workers from the local community will be hired where and when possible. They also assured the attendees that gender equality will be met as much as possible if the skills required are available in the women of the communities.