

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 18, 2016

Venue: Johnny's Town (Voinjama District – Lofa County)

Attendants:

Name	Organization	Position	Contact
Varlue Tamba			0888283869
Jamah M. Follie		Youth	
Francis M. Koiyan		Youth	
Signor George			0880586744
Junior T. Kollie		Town Chief	
Peter M. Koiyan			
Weedor Masseyam			
Sonnie Kollie			
Mary S. Kormah			0888020410
Agatta Beyan			
Mulbah Yakoi		Elder	
Kessee Zorvee		Elder	
Korpo J. Kollie			
Domonwa Wayer		Market Superintendent	
Morla Torvee			
Samie Jartu		Chair Lady	
Kpanah Tennie			
Pete B. Jomah			
Kebeith Kollie		Deliverer	
John Massayan		Elder	
Keibeth Zoe		Student	0770505406
Keibeth Ballah			
Rebecca Korvah			
Allice Koibene			
Morris Sheriff		Elder	0886651489
William M. Samorly			0775796457
Sylvester Sammie			
Abraham Bility	Rural and Renewable Energy Agency (RREA)	Social Development Officer	0886621340
Jorn Stave	Multiconsult	ESIA Team Leader	0888392613
Williette T. Clarke	Earthtime	Administrative Assistant	0880556677 0777399999
Basma Shamas	Earthtime	Environmental Consultant	0888300766

Summary:

A meeting was held between the community members of Johnny's Town including town chief, chair lady, elders and youth 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:

- **What is the cost of the current and who will be responsible for controlling the system within the town?**

Jorn Stave (ESIA Team Leader) explained the technical part of the procedure where a transformer would be installed along the transmission line section passing through the town, to enable the distribution of electricity to the community. A distribution line, which is beyond the scope of this project but might be covered under different smaller scale projects that might run in parallel, should be installed.

The government represented by the Renewable Rural Energy Agency (RREA) will be responsible for the system and will assign employees to take care of the demand applications and maintenance and repairs needed.

Abraham Bility (RREA Representative) explained that the receivers would be paying for the electricity they will use. The cost of the current is not determined yet and will be determined at a later stage of the implementation through an assessment project; however the cost would be lower than the electricity generated using fuel oil.

- **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, heritage sites and coffee/cocoa gardens or other crops.

Abraham Bility (RREA) 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.

Abraham 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 addition, the attendees confirmed that some traditional sites 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 discuss relocation of these sites if needed.

- **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.

- **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.