

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 17, 2016

Venue: Mbabahun Town (Kolahun District – Lofa County)

Attendants:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Town/ organization</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Contact</i>
Junior Boolay		Security	0776270725
Jonathan N. Kollie		Teacher	0880702307
Foday Momoh		Elder	0886775214
Anita B. Ndorleh		Student	0775242638
Stephen S. Ndorbor		Elder	0770384222
Daniel Kpehe		Youth	0880559323
Augustine Paylay		Youth	0880950716
David S. Ndebe		Teacher	0886037682
Sando Varfee		Youth	
Kpehe Ngafua		Elder	
Sando Ngaima		Elder	
Thomas Kollie		Elder	
Solei Ndebeh		Elder	
Harris H. Sengbeh		Teacher	0775126652
Paylay Ngaina		Farmer	
James Jallah		Elder	
Kpana Augustine		Farmer	
Fematta Varfee		Farmer	
Morris M. Varfee		Teacher	
Sanecie Jalsbee		Business	0880319748
Kpana Bolay		Business	
Kpana Varney		Business	
Sangai Koilor		Zoe/Speaker	
Jartu Paylay		Farmer	
Jenneh Korto		Business	0888546896
Sangai Harlay		Farmer	
Hawa Ndebeh		Chair lady	
James B Koryon		Teacher	0880361253
John Sembeh		Mason	
Abraham Bility	Rural and Renewable Energy Agency (RREA)	Social Development Officer	0886621340
Williette T. Clarke	Earthtime	Administrative Assistant	0880556677 0777399999
Basma Shamas	Earthtime	Environmental Consultant	0888300766

Summary:

A meeting was held between the community members of Mbabahun Town including chair lady, elders, youth and teachers, and representatives of Liberia's Rural & Renewable Energy Agency (RREA), 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) 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:

- **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.

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 this regard, the attendees confirmed that they are willing to discuss this issue and reach agreements as this development is very important to them and they will try to cooperate so it can reach the implementation phase.

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 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.