

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 19, 2016

Venue: Superintendent Head Quarters - Voinjama City (Lofa County)

Attendants:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Contact</i>
Zayzay Fobay		Secretary	0775086685
Andrew M. Akoi	Voinjama District	Youth Leader	0775958622
Henry A. Jallah	Voinjama CC	Secretary	0776212258
Thomas Kullie	HeadQuarter	Secretary	0777733546
Nathaniel Zegbo	Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)	Security	077665678
Esther Akoi		Community Leader	0776201447
Korpo Telloyan	Ministry of Public Works		0886839313
Kueloo J. Miaway			0775514013
Edwina Mawolo		Youth	0770260538
Esther M. Konyin		Coordinator	0770240874
Kormasa Z. Jallah	Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)	Deputy Chairlady	
Kullie M. Bazzie	Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)	Voinjama District Commissioner	077079281
Baysah Telewoyau	Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)	Paramount Chief	
Kormassa Z. Jallah	Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)	District Chairlady	
Abraham T. Gray	Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)	District Youth Leader	0770328406
Korpo T. Jallah		Youth	
David Mawolo	Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)	District Clerk	0777431724
Mamadou L Saw		Secretary	077583670
Komoh Kamars		Youth	0776077627
Weddy S, Kolee	YMCA	Youth	0775915264
Promise Koluah		Youth	0770474325
Mercy Davis	ADC	Youth	0775887476
J. Tanue Sumo	LMA	Secretary	0770028278
Lasana V. Kamara		Student	0776571957
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 commissioner, leader and chiefs of Voinjama District 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.

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 current be available on a continuous basis during dry and rainy seasons?**

Jorn Stave (ESIA Team Leader) explained that during the rainy season more water will be flowing in the river through the turbines which will allow continuous generation of current.

During the Dry season when water levels are lower, the water will be collected during morning hours and released through the turbines to generate current during evenings and night time.

- **What are the effects of this project on people running generator business?**

Abraham Bility (RREA) replied that the purpose of this project is to provide electricity to rural areas at lower cost that they can afford.

This might probably impact and decrease the generators business to a certain extent, but these will still be needed as the project will not be able to provide current to all the towns at all times.

- **Who will be responsible for controlling the project and the current?**

Abraham Bility (RREA) replied that this is a government owned project that will be controlled by Renewable Rural Energy Agency (RREA).

- **What kind of poles is used for the transmission line?**

Jorn Stave (ESIA Team Leader) answered that the transmission line poles are steel poles. Each pole is 12 m high and has a 2x2 m base.

- **What will be the cost of current and method of payment?**

Abraham Bility (RREA) replied that these details are not decided yet and they will be decided based on a market study that will be performed later, but the current cost will be lower than the cost of electricity generated by fuel oil.

- **Employment opportunities and gender equality during the project phases:**

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 communities 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.

The attendees also suggested that the local authorities should start with a capacity building program for students from the communities to orient them towards the expertise that will be needed during the project operation phase which will lead to local employment during operation as well.

- **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.

- **Compensations for the towns that will not be supplied with the current although they will be hosting the transmission line?**

The attendees asked if there will be any type of compensation for the towns that are not assigned for a transformer and will not be receiving the current and they suggested that street lights might be installed for these towns to benefit from the current to certain extent.

The team received the suggestion and promised to communicate it to the projects engineers for assessment.

- **What will be the effect on the downstream of the dam?**

Jorn Stave (ESIA Team Leader) explained that the water will be diverted for approximately 50 m only from the top of the dam to the turbines. Water will then be released to flow back into the downstream. The only part that will be affected is the waterfall.

- **What are the impacts on the environment from the transformers?**

Jorn Stave (ESIA Team Leader) explained that the transformers do not usually have negative effects on the environment and are produced based on international standard and using environmental friendly materials.

- **How will the areas affected by the transmission line and access road be compensated?**

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. With the absence of a formal local compensation system that can be applied to all the towns, discussions and agreements with the communities will take place 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 design will try to avoid any traditional and cultural sites. During implementation, the contractors should consult with the town chiefs to locate these areas and try to avoid crossing through them; however, if any project component will need to cross through any of these sites, negotiations with local communities will take place to reach an agreement.