

MINUTES OF MEETING

PUBLIC HEARING OF ENVIRONMENTAL / SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (ESA) OF M/S IESCO'S PROJECT "6TH SECONDARY TRANSMISSION & GRID (STG) & DISTRIBUTION REHABILITATION / ENERGY LOSS REDUCTION (ELR) PROJECT (2006-07)" HELD ON 14TH NOVEMBER, 2007 AT IESCO'S HEAD OFFICE, G-7/4, ISLAMABAD.

The public hearing started with the recitation of Holy Quran. Raja Abdul Ghafoor, Chief Engineer (Tech)/ Acting Chief Executive Officer IESCO chaired the hearing and Deputy Director (EIA/Mont.), Pak-EPA acted as stage secretary. List of participants is at Annex-I.

On behalf of Director General, Pak-EPA, Director (EIA/Mont.) in his opening remarks welcomed participants. He mentioned significance of public participation and Pakistan Environmental Protection Act, 1997; which provides the interactive forum between the proponent & stakeholders. He was of the view that we are not against the development, but believe in the sustainable development, which can only be possible if the proponent of project ensures compliance of Pakistan Environmental Protection Act, 1997 and Regulations made there under. He apprised the participants that IESCO's project is Trans - boundary, some parts/ portion of project falls in Punjab province and passing through Islamabad towards the Azad Jammu and Kashmir. So in such cases, Pak-EPA is trying to onboard other concerned EPAs and holding public hearings with their consent . In this connection EPA-Punjab was agreed to arrange one public hearing at Islamabad, but EPA-AJK was willing to conduct public hearing at Rawala Kot for the portion lying in AJK-EPA. In this regard, Pak-EPA conducted one public hearing at Rawalakot on 5th November, 2007 in coordination with AJK-EPA wherein about 6 Member Legislation Assembly participated in the hearing and exchange their view on environment and social issues.

He further informed the participants that Pak-EPA understands the significance of the project and never wants to delay the project. He intimated the forum that some of the major issues came up during the public hearing held at Rawala kot. The issues are as under:

- i. Migratory bird routes disturbances.
- ii. Social issues i.e compensation of acquired land or resettlement; and employment for local people.

The issues were of genuine in nature, the consultant and proponent agreed to mitigate these issues properly. He thanked again all participants who have spent their precious time to take part in the hearing.

Acting Chief Executive Officer, IESCO in his remarks pay tribute to Pak-EPA and thanked all other participants. He further explained the forum that it is a World Bank funded project and environmental approval of project is essential requirement. However no Electric Supply Companies heeded upon the environmental issues; however, IESCO is one of these to comply Pakistan Environmental Protection Act, 1997. He assured the forum that whatever genuine environment/ social concerns would rise by the participants shall not only incorporate in ESA but be implemented.

Thereafter, Manager (GSO) presented the introduction of IESO and the proposed project activities then followed by the presentation on ESA by the IESCO consultant. The consultant during presentation on ESA, explained baseline study, analysis of impacts, mitigation measures and suggested monitoring mechanism during and after execution of the proposed project.

After completion of the presentation, Director (EIA/Mont.), Pak-EPA opened the floor for discussion.

Dr. Abdul Rauf Farooqi, Professor & Head Deptt: of Environmental Sciences AIOU, H-8 Islamabad, was of the view that why it is not possible to save electricity? There is a need to create awareness among the masses. For this activity he could guide how to seek funding. He further pointed out some gaps in ESA report i.e. loss and damage to soil erosion, wildlife and vegetation are not included in ESA. It is not described the right of education, proper sanitation and drinking water for the staff. It is not clarified how much population will be affected by the execution of the project; how much trees will be felled down. Electro magnetic radiation would be produced that would also affect on the environment. He also raised issues pertaining to human security and safety.

Mr. Zahidullah, Lecturer, Department of Environmental Sciences, AIOU, H-8/2, Islamabad raised the following queries:

- i. Reversible and irreversible impacts analysis should be given.
- ii. Why the alternative of the project was not chosen.

Dr. Aurangzeb Khan, Environmental Expert P&D Division, Islamabad, supported the comments and concerns of Dr. Farooqui and praised the consultant for carrying out ESA study. He shared his experience and suggested there is time to integrate environment in development. However, every body has to know ground realities of the project. Pak-EPA is trying to enforce and implement Pakistan Environmental Protection Act, 1997 in both private and public sector. He focused that instead of ideal situation, acceptability factors may also be considered.

Mr. Z.B. Mirza (Biodiversity Specialist); was of the view that when any structure will be established, wild life must be distributed. As transmission lines are passing from agriculture areas, have some benefits also i.e to control insects and rodents etc. Transmission lines disturbance is there but adaptability factor is already there. The wild life can readapt it over there. He assured that during the undertaking of this study, no any endangered speecy / trees falls in the project alignment.

Mr. Jamil Asghar Bhatte (From Green Management, NGO): was of the view that there is a need to participate community during the EIA study of such projects. In Pakistan; EIA is new culture. However, this is detailed ESA Study almost cover all environmental and social aspects. He suggested that don't screw review process so that people got scare of doing EIA. He quoted example of Islamabad/ Rawalpindi landfill projects, which are still hanged up.

Mr. Muhammad Umer Khalid (Environmental Consultant of ESA Report): responded the quarries/ concerns as under:

First of all he thanked the stakeholders for comments and encouragement. Regarding the colonies, he apprised that it is the part of the project & grid stations, and has added mitigation measures in project though not mentioned in the report. Colony would be consisted on 5-10 quarters so its waste management plan is already given in the ESA report. He assured that construction camps would not be established near the community area, it will be located at about 1 KM distance away from the existing community. As far as trees cutting are concerned, tree cutting plan would be prepared along with implementing parameters and same would be submitted to the proponent (IESCO) for approval. Consultant was of the view that he believes in sustainable development which is economically viable, socially equitable and environmentally responsible. He further explained that gender issue is already highlighted in the ESA report. About 90% transmission lines are passing through cultivated areas wherein wild life seems to be

rare. However, wild birds were seen over there during the study. He further conceded that during the project activities, the birds population might be reduced and some of the birds may adapt the area. The consultant while responding the effects of electromagnetic radiations clarified that there is a need to carry out research on this issue, but in Pakistan no any literature or research has been done in recent past. He further intimated that every impact has been categorized either reversible or irreversible and also mentioned alternatives for the proposed project in detail ESA report.

After completion of question / answer section, Acting Chief Executive Officer thanked, Pak-EPA for arranging this public hearing to review the ESA project. He was of the view that we are in learning, stage, many new things came up during presentations and discussion that enlightened and more aware us for environmental issues. Although the issues raised are approachable to resolve/ mitigate. In last, he assured the forum that all the genuine issues related to environment and social would properly be mitigated and be made as the part of ESA report. He further requested Director, Pak-EPA, to kindly accelerate the process of environmental approval to enable IESCO to execute the proposed project timely.

In his closing remarks, Director (EIA/Mont.) Pak-EPA thanked both proponent and stakeholders. He assured the forum that the concerns related to environment will be forwarded to the proponent for clarification and response and these issues would be made as part of ESA. He further added that EIA study is not an easy task; there is a need of complete team who can undertake this study. He also thanked World Bank, UNDP and Planning and Development Division representatives who participated in the public hearing. He was of the view that though EIA process is new in Pakistan and due to continuous struggle of Federal & Provincial EPAs and coordination of the other linked departments, this process is started and it is gaining strength accelerate in near future. However one thing is very clear that we have to be friendly and support

to economic development with environmental management. Further to add that we have to encourage proponent to come forward and ensure for environment friendly development. Finally he once again thanked all participants, IESCO management and consultant and his team.

The meeting ended with vote of thanks.