

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE PUBLIC HEARING ON
WIDENING TO 2-LANE, RE-ALIGNMENT AND GEOMETRIC IMPROVEMENT OF
LUNGLEI-TLABUNG-KAWRPUICHHUAH ROAD (00.000 KM to 87.350 KM) WITHIN
MIZORAM STATE ROADS PROJECT II**

Venue : SAIKUTI HALL, LUNGLEI, MIZORAM
Date & Time : 22nd JANUARY, 2014 (WEDNESDAY), 11:00 A.M

INTRODUCTION:

The Government of India has requested World Bank financing for the improvement and rehabilitation of State Highways and Major District Roads in the State of Mizoram that enhance connectivity to Bangladesh and Myanmar. The proposed roads project includes a 336 km north-south alignment starting at the NH44A junction between Aizawl and Tripura State passing through Thenhlum, Phairuangkai, Chawngte and connecting to the Multi-modal Kaladan Road at the southern end. Other road links in the project include the 112 km east-west Lunglei-Lungsen-Tlabung-Kawrpuchhuah road which links to nearby Chittagong Port (through Rangamati) in Bangladesh and the east-west 28km Champhai-Zokhawthar road and 42 km Chhumkhum - Chawngte road.

The public hearing is convened to obtain views, comments & suggestions on the project, ‘Widening to 2-Lane, Re-alignment and Geometric improvement of Lunglei-Tlabung-Kawrpuchhuah Road (00.000 Km To 87.350 Km) within Mizoram State Roads Project II’ from the people of affected areas.

*A total of 537 persons participated in the meeting. List of participants is enclosed as
Annexure - I*

The Hearing was presided over by Dr. Andrew H. Vanlaldika, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Lunglei District, Mizoram at the scheduled date and time. The participants include all sections of life. The chairman expressed his warm welcome to all the officials from Mizoram Pollution Control Board, Public Works Department, Govt. of Mizoram and all the participants from the villages falling under the project area such as, Hauruang, Phairuang, Rotlang, Lungsen, Sihphir, Tuichawng, Tlabung and other nearby villages. The chairman then stressed upon the necessity of proper road connectivity for the development of a country and the people and stated that it is a blessing for the people of Mizoram that a project for improvement of Lunglei-Tlabung-Kawrpuchhuah road has evolved. He further invited the participants of the Public Hearing to feel free to deliver their views, suggestions and any clarifications regarding the Project.

The Chairman then invited Dr Lalramnghaki Pachuau, Scientist 'B', Mizoram Pollution Control Board to deliver introductory remarks. She explained the reasons for holding the Public meeting which is a mandatory step for obtaining Environmental Clearance for the project under discussion from Ministry of Environment & Forests, Govt. of India. She also gave brief report on the action taken to conduct the Public Hearing, saying that the application to conduct the Public Hearing was received from the Project proponent, that is, Public Works Department (PWD), Govt. of Mizoram on 12.12.2013, following which the Hearing Notice was served in Times of India and Vanglaini daily newspaper giving the public a period of 30 days an access to the draft EIA Report prepared by the department; however, she reported that no comments nor responses was received from the public during the period. She further explained the roles of MPCB during and after the Public Hearing, and further added that the Hearing was meant for the public/affected people of the project area and hence, requested the public to speak out their minds freely regarding their views, clarifications or suggestions on the environmental concerns of the proposed project so that the project proponent could make necessary modifications in the draft EIA report for preparation of Final Report.

The Chairman then requested Er. S. R. Laltlanthanga, A.E., PWD to give presentation on the technical reports of the project. He expressed the need of the project saying that widening and reconstruction of the existing Road of Lunglen-Tlabung-Kawpuichhuah is the main objective of the project. The existing Lunglei - Tlabung Road was originally constructed as ODR Standard road during the early part of seventies. It was constructed by the BRO .The road was constructed to provide connectivity between district headquarters and International boarder of Indo Bangladesh for international trading but also for development of western part of Mizoram. Existing road take off from Km 4.5 of NH 54 A passes through the villages and terminate at River Sazuk Lui (km 98.0) , Indo Bangladesh Boarder and this road passes through nine villages, i.e. Lunglei ,Hauruang ,Pachang ,Phairuang,Rotlang,Lungsen,Sihphir,Tuichawng & Tlabung and Kawrpuichhuah. The initial stretch of the Lunglei-Tlabung road passes through heavily built-up areas which involve costly of Land Acquisition and serious resettlement problems in the existing road. The existing alignment also passes through steep terrains which are unstable and landslide prone area at many locations which could also pose serious problems in future. Due to these reasons, it was felt absolutely necessary to re-align the existing initial stretch of the Lunglei-Tlabung road between km 0/00 –7/00 by shifting the existing take-off point at km 4/500 to a proposed new take-off point at km 3/700 (i.e. located at out skirt of Lunglei town) on NH 54A . The improvement works will consist mainly of widening and some new construction to two-lane Asian Highway standard, pavement construction, strengthening, improving, constructing of bridges, cross drainage structures and longitudinal drainage and provision of adequate slope

protection works. Road stretches crossing semi-urban areas and villages may also require provision for covered drains, sidewalks and parking where required. In some cases, new alignments (by-passes) and/or realignments for the existing villages and towns may also be required.

He highlighted the salient features of the project as below:

Length of Project Road Sector Km 87.352

The road has a ROW of 24 m.

The formation width is 12 m.

The Highway is designed for 2-lane carriageway of 7.0 m width.

The Highway is designed with flexible pavement

Pave shoulders of 2.50m is provided both sides.

All structures are matching to two lane NH roadway standard.

Route Alignment: take off from Km 4.5 of NH 54 A passes through the villages and terminate at km 98.0 on River Sazuk Lui Indo Bangladesh Boarder

Drains: Lined Drain.

Landslide : Minor

Junction – 5 Nos., Major Junction – 4 Nos & Minor Junction – 1 Nos

He further emphasized on the environmental issues related to the project and mitigation measures proposed under the project as under:

Stability of Slopes

Zoning has been worked out on the basis of the geological characteristics, and cut slopes were recommended for short stretches to cover the entire upgradation road. Vulnerable locations in terms of landslides have been identified and that hill cutting be avoided and controlled blasting be used to limit the volume and extent of rock throw.

Disposal of Construction Debris

Disposal areas have been identified avoiding the ecologically sensitive areas and impacts on private and community properties.

Loss of Biodiversity

The presence of endangered species such as Cyathus (tree fern) along the roadside and some species of medicinal plants have been identified in the project area. The impacts of the project will not lead to extinction or similar critical ends. However, the project needs to protect/conservate the small patches of bio-diversity rich areas and individual endangered plants.

Water for Construction - Storage and Harvesting.

The procurement of water is usually the Contractor's responsibility, 10 locations have been identified for water storage / harvesting structures. These structures will be beneficial to the community after the construction.

Land Requirements for the project

The project shall involve the acquisition of:

Private properties, within the settlements, with a valid pass from the Village Council;

Agricultural properties, with or without permission from the Government;

Lands belonging to community organisations as NGOs;

Lands belonging to the governmental agencies/departments, and;

Forest land

Impact on Cultural properties

There are no major protected or archaeological monuments to be directly impacted due to the project. Apart from these, there are lands belonging to church and structures on these lands that will be acquired.

Other Social Issues

As part of the Resettlement and Indigenous Peoples Development Plan (R&IPDP) for the project, an assessment of the various social issues as the loss of access, road safety, disruption of livelihood, gender issues due to the project, and other issues related to HIV/AIDS have been addressed.

Traffic Safety and Management during Construction

Adequate measures have been worked out, including the timing of the construction activities and alternative routes for diversion of traffic to ensure the safety of road users and management of traffic during construction.

Environmental Management Measures Proposed

A description of various management measures during the various stages of the project is provided in the following sections.

Pre-construction Stage

This will include the clearance of the ROW, plantation of trees, the measures for protecting/replacing community resources such as hand pumps and other utilities likely to be impacted. Their enhancement shall also be completed before construction actually starts so that the community can start using these while the construction activity begins.

Construction Stage

This will be most crucial and active stage for the Environmental Management Plan. In addition to the Monitoring of the construction activity itself to ensure that the environment is not impacted beyond permissible limits, the enhancement of cultural properties, mitigation and enhancement measures for water bodies will go simultaneously as the construction progresses.

Operation Stage

The operation stage will essentially entail monitoring activity along the corridor. The monitoring for pollutants specified in the Monitoring Plan will serve the two purposes. In addition to checking the efficacy of the protection/mitigation/enhancement measures implemented, this will help verify or refuse the predictions made as a part of the impact assessment.

Environmental Monitoring Program

To ensure the effective implementation of the EMP, it is essential that an effective monitoring program be designed and carried out. The broad objectives are:

To evaluate the performance of mitigation measures proposed in the EMP

To evaluate the adequacy of Environmental Impact Assessment

To suggest improvements in management plan, if required

To enhance environmental quality

To satisfy the legal and community obligations.

Performance Indicator and monitoring

The physical, biological and social components such as Air quality, Water quality, Noise levels around sensitive locations, Plantation success / survival rate, Soil contamination, Vital statistics on health, Accident frequency identified as of particular significance in affecting the environment at critical locations have been suggested as Performance Indicators (PIs), where Air quality, Water quality, Noise level, flora and soil contamination monitoring will be qualitatively and quantitatively measured and compared over a period of time, due to their importance and the availability of standardized procedures and expertise.

He further indicated the Institutional arrangements in PWD for implementation of the project under MSRP-2 and also mentioned that the approximate budget for the Environmental management costs for the MSRP-2 is 45,500,000 (INR)

The Chairman then invited comments, views and suggestions and clarifications from participants of the hearing. The main issues raised by the public and comments from the project proponent were as summarized below whereas the detailed statement of the issues raised and replies thereof in Mizo and English is enclosed as *Annexure- II (a)* and *Annexure-II (b)*

respectively. Videotape in original covering the entire proceedings of the public hearing is also enclosed as *Annexure-III*.

- 1. Camp sites for the labourers:** The camp site for the labourers is already identified at Tuichawng village. But why is this not reflected in the technical report? Is it possible to identify additional sites for labourers' camps?

Response: It must have been omitted in the report, purely by mistake. Additional sites shall be identified once the contractors are selected after obtaining Environmental Clearance from MoEF, Govt. of India.

- 2. Depletion of water source at Lungsen village:** 'Thianga vau tui' which is the main source of water for the community of Lungsen village will be depleted with the construction of new road. What measures are to be taken by the project proponent to protect this community's one and only source of water?

Response: The project proponent i.e PWD is also much concerned over this. They will adopt all the possible measures to protect this water source by re-constructing pipelines and by taking preventive measures so as not to avoid or minimize the disturbances as far as possible.

- 3. Destruction of RCC building due to road construction:** One RCC building which is under construction is located at Sazaikawn and Rs.14 lakhs is already spent for this construction. Is this building at the risk of destruction by the road construction?

Response: Proper care will be taken so as not to damage the building due to road construction. Moreover, blasting of rocks will be undertaken under the supervision of the experts adopting controlled blasting technique.

- 4. Disposal of the excavated spoil:** One participant offered his land at Tlabung road for disposal of excavated spoil from road construction, if the department has the need for the same.

Response: There will be huge amount of excavated spoil and therefore required a number of disposal sites. Hence, PWD appreciated and welcomed the offer and are also ready to fill-up other places like community playgrounds, if felt required by the local people.

- 5. Waste Management:** Pollution will be created from the haphazard disposal of wastes by the labourers. How will this be taken care of by the Project Proponent?

Response: Contractors will be responsible for these. They will be required to provide disposal facilities like proper toilets for the labourers.

- 6. Public Complaints:** If any complaints arise from the Public, where will the complaints be lodged?

Response: Grievances Redressal Committee (GRC) under the Chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner with representatives from local NGOs as members, is to be formed before construction is started. Complaints, if any, can be lodged to the GRC.

- 7. Compensation:** On what basis will compensatory allowances be calculated? Is the rate different for LSC and periodic patta holders? How much will be given as compensation to those who are going to lose their Land/Houses?

Response: Compensation related matters are dealt by Special Land Acquisition Officer (SLAO) office at Aizawl. The office is working very hard giving their best efforts to complete the procedures at the earliest. Compensation will be given as per the rates notified by Revenue Department, Government of Mizoram. For LSC holders there will be other additional allowances.

- 8. Prevention of Fire:** Lunglawn village is situated on a very steep rocky terrain and are very prone to fire outbreaks. Is it possible to have a preventive measure to prevent this fire?

Response: Blasting of rocks will be done under controlled technique. It is also important to create awareness among the people for the need of prevention of fire outbreaks arised due to the carelessness of the community.

- 9. Economic impacts on Phairuang Village:** The Occupation of this village is based in and around Phairuang River. With the road construction, the settlements will be shifted more towards the river bank. Is there any possibility of identifying new land for crop plantation? What measures will be taken to control floods?

Response: Plantations may not be much disturbed. If trees and crops are destroyed because of construction works, compensatory allowances will be given to the land owners.

- 10. Change of alignment:** Is it yet possible to modify the alignment so as to provide more wide bend to the road near Tlabung hospital?

Response: Design has already been prepared; it may be difficult to make changes, however, efforts will be given to find ways at the time of construction works as and where possible.

11. Omission of houses likely to be destroyed: Some houses appear to be omitted for receiving compensation. Is it possible to include these houses again for receiving compensation?

Response: Survey was carried out by a Group of project proponent in consultation with local NGOs and V.C. in identifying houses for compensation. If there is any omissions by mistake, the matter will be referred to the SLAO office for further inclusion of the omitted houses. As reported by VC, there are about 5 houses omitted as such.

12. Request from participant: A participant from Lungsen village appealed to the project proponent not to by-pass Lungsen village and instead to improve the existing road passing through the village.

Response: Since the alignment is already finalized after taking into accounts all the parameters required for designing the road, making changes with respect to the alignment is not feasible at this stage.

13. Cost of timber: Will it be possible to calculate the cost of timbers at the market rate for estimating compensation?

Response: Not possible. Only existing Government approved rate can be adopted.

As invited by the chairman, Er. Lalzawmthanga, E.E.(Env), PIU, PWD delivered vote of thanks and the Chairman ended the meeting.



(Dr. ANDREW H. VANLALDIKA),
Additional Deputy Commissioner,
Lunglei District, Lunglei, Mizoram
&
Chairman
Public Hearing