

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE PUBLIC HEARING ON  
WIDENING TO 2-LANE, RE-ALIGNMENT AND GEOMETRIC IMPROVEMENT OF  
CHAMPHAI-ZOKHAWTHAR ROAD (00.000 KM to 27.247 KM) WITHIN MIZORAM  
STATE ROADS PROJECT II**

*Venue* : MANGKHAIA HALL, ZOTLANG, CHAMPHAI, MIZORAM

*Date & Time* : 17<sup>th</sup> January 2014, 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, Phairuankai, 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 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 re-alignments for the existing villages and towns may also be required.

The Project Implementation Unit (PIU) within the Public Works Department (PWD) of the Government of Mizoram will be the implementing agency for the project .The PIU is located in the capital of Mizoram State, Aizawl.

The existing Champhai – Zokhawthar road was originally constructed as other district road (ODR) Standard road during the early part of eighties. It was constructed by the State Public Works Department (PWD). The road was constructed to provide connectivity between district headquarters and International boarder of Indo Myanmar for international trading but also for Eastern part of Mizoram. The total length of the project road is 27.247 km. (including 2.53 km of spur road). The road was upgraded to the status of State highway (SH) and International trading route between India and Myanmar in the year 2005. Existing road take off from Km 150.0 of Seiling Champhai Road passes through the villages and Terminate at km 26.60 on River Tiau Indo Myanmar Boarder and this road passes through five villages, i.e. Khankawn, Zotlang, Ruatlang , Mualkawi, Melbuk & Zokhawthar.

**The public hearing is convened to obtain views, comments & suggestions on the project, 'Widening to 2-Lane, Re-alignment and Geometric improvement of Champhai-Zokhawthar Road (00.000 Km To 27.247 Km) within Mizoram State Roads Project II' from the people of affected areas.**

*A total of 430 persons participated in the meeting. List of participants is enclosed as **Annexure - I***

The Hearing was presided over by Mr. Zoengsanga, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Champhai District, Mizoram at the scheduled date and time. The participants include all sections of life.

At the outset, the chairman expressed his warm welcome to all the participants especially to those coming from different villages that include Zokhawthar, Melbuk, Mualkawi, Zotlang and Champhai town. He added that good road connectivity is needed to fulfill the Indo-Myanmar Border Trade, which we have been dreaming of from long time back. The project is such an important issue for the people and the state of Mizoram that the chairman requested all the participants to give full attention and make mental preparations before speaking out their minds. Since the public meeting is convened solely in connection to the Environmental clearance being applied by the project proponent to the Ministry, chairman requested the participants to concentrate more towards the environmental concerns related to the project. He further requested the public to cooperate and give full support for the success of the project.

The chairman then invited Dr Lalramnghaki Pachuau, Scientist 'B', Mizoram Pollution Control Board to deliver introductory remarks. The speaker 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 the Final Report.

The chairman then requested Er. Lalthanngi Ralte, A.E.(Env), PIU, PWD to give presentation on the technical reports of the project. The presenter first commented on the importance of mitigating the environment with developmental project works. Then, she highlighted about the salient features of the project, about the proposed project roads under MSRP-II, objectives and scopes of the project, re-alignments proposed, v.i.z., first realignments on Seling-Champhai road, second realignment within Mualkawi village, third realignment at Melbuk village and forth realignment at Melbuk and Zokhawthar villages. She further talked about the environmental issues related to the project and mitigation measures proposed under the project. She further emphasized on the various issues and concerns raised during the stakeholder consultations conducted for the project; depletion of water resources, degradation of forests land, natural resources, occurrence of landslides, construction wastes disposal, bypasses and diversions concerns, power supply disruption, road safety concerns, desire for cutting towards hillside and timely implementation of the project and public involvements and adverse effects of dust pollution, noise pollution etc.

After this, the chairman invited comments, views , suggestions and clarifications from participants of the hearing which were clarified, one by one, by the project proponent. 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. **Proposed alignment of the road:** Whether alignment of the proposed road is finalized and if any changes is yet possible?

**Response:** It is finalized and not convenient to make changes with the proposed alignment.

2. **Implementation of the project:** When will the road construction be started?

**Response:** Project will be initiated once all the requisite formalities are completed. Despite the limited time and huge preparatory works at pre-construction stage, PWD is working hard giving many efforts for early implementation and start of the project. Forests clearance was already obtained for Champhai-Zokhawthar road project. Environmental Impact Assessment Report and Environmental Management Plan for the same were finalized and under submission for consideration of Environmental Clearance from MoEF. Assessment for compensation under socio-economic impact is also going on for which PWD is giving its best effort for early finalization.

3. **Compensation:** When will compensation be released to the affected people?

**Response:** It is expected that compensation be released in the early date, however, the exact date is not yet finalized.

4. **Conservation of wildlife:** The local people have been giving efforts in conserving forests and animal species such as monkey, Goral, Serow etc. inhabiting Changel kham (cliff) below Melbuk village; What kind of measures would be taken to preserve these wildlife animals after road construction?

**Response:** Fencing with barbed wires will be done, if necessary.

5. **Quality of road under the project:** What is the proposed thickness of the road?

**Response:** 580 mm (about 0.5 metre) in total.

6. **Water sources depletion:** One existing community water handpump at Champhai Zotlang is likely to be destroyed by the road construction, how will this water source, if depleted be compensated?

**Response:** It will not be feasible to re-construct the pump on the new road, however, a new water source of the same kind or the other will be provided nearby for the community.

7. **Disposal of wastes:** Is there any proposed plan for solid waste management after new roads are constructed under the project?

**Response:** This is the purview of other departments, perhaps, Mizoram State Pollution Control Board together with the local people will work on this once the road is constructed.

8. **Utilization of fund by Project proponent:** Will the fund be properly/fully utilized to construct the roads as per the proposed plan?

**Response:** It is assured that the fund would be rightly utilized for the purpose it is sanctioned. Further, anyone with interests can always get informations pertaining to this through RTI Act.

9. **Loss of structures due to road construction:** At Mualkawi village, as per the technical report, due to unstability of land, 5 to 6 houses are expected to collapse after road construction due to landslides. Can these houses be compensated as well?

**Response:** As of now, only those structures on the proposed road area could be considered for receiving compensatory allowances. For other structures, we will see what we can do as we proceed with the project.

10. **Construction of fly-over bridge:** Is it there any possibility of constructing fly-over bridge under the project for safety measures of the people?

**Response:** The project has no provision for the construction of fly-over bridge this time.

11. **Inclusion of footpath in the proposed road:** The Project report indicated that the proposed road width is 12 m without any mention about the footpath for the pedestrians; is there no provision for footpath construction in the project?

**Response:** Yes, the project should include construction of footpaths as the design is made as per the guidelines of IRC.

12. **Disturbances of project under minor irrigation:** Lungloh minor irrigation project undertaken by Minor Irrigation Department costing Rs.1.2 crore would be disturbed by the project as the proposed road would be passing through some of the irrigation channels. Whether the PWD has been aware of this and communicated with the Minor Irrigation department on this issue?

**Response:** The matter will be discussed with the Minor Irrigation Department.

13. **Suggestion:** It is suggested by a local participant that as a special package for Champhai, the approach road to Hringlangtlang Park be furnished with black topping under the project.

14. **Comment:** As commented by a local participant, the people of Champhai district are very happy with the project considering all the benefits it will bring to the people of the district. Although the people are aware of the adverse effects the project will cause to the habitat, wildlife and environment, the beneficial aspects are considered outweighing the adverse effects; hence it is their dearest wish that the project is successfully implemented. It is also their desire that the people get benefits wherever possible from the project and that the project is carried out effectively with proper utilization of fund. In general, the people are in agreement with the project.

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



(ZOENGSANGA),  
Additional Deputy Commissioner,  
Champhai District, Champhai, Mizoram  
&  
Chairman  
Public Hearing