

**MINUTES OF THE 23<sup>RD</sup> EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING  
OF SOUTH ASIA FORUM FOR INFRASTRUCTURE REGULATION (SAFIR)**

**DATE: 8<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2022**

**VENUE: CYPRESS HALL, INDIA HABITAT CENTRE, NEW DELHI, INDIA**

1. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Samdrup K. Thinley, Chairperson, South Asia Forum for Infrastructure Regulation (SAFIR) & CEO, Bhutan Electricity Authority, Bhutan.
2. Chairperson CERC in his opening remarks thanked the members for participating in the meeting and emphasized on the importance of SAFIR in providing platform for experience sharing on best practices on infrastructure sectors in South Asian region. He added that SAFIR has been ably assisted by multilateral agencies such as USAID and the World Bank on issues such as regional power market and common minimum grid code.
3. Chairperson SAFIR and CEO of Bhutan Electricity Authority, welcomed all the members. He added that as a part of a delegation of SAFIR Member countries to CERC, he had attended the public hearing conducted by CERC and was happy to have good learnings from the same. Furthermore, he highlighted significant contributions of Mr. P.K. Pujari, Chairperson CERC and thanked him for his constant support to SAFIR.
4. In his address, Mr. Mohammed Abu Faruque, Member, Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission thanked and congratulated the SAFIR secretariat for organizing the meeting and looked forward to a fruitful discussion.
5. In her address, Ms. Chathurika Wijesinghe, Member of the Public Utilities Commission of Sri Lanka (PUCSL) thanked Chairperson, SAFIR for inviting her to the meeting. Furthermore, she elaborated on the current issues being faced by Sri Lanka and assured the members that the situation is not as grim as

it is made out on the media. She invited the EC members to Sri Lanka for conducting meetings in future.

List of participants is enclosed at **Annexure-I**.

The Forum thereafter took each of the agenda items for consideration.

**AGENDA ITEM 1: CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE 22<sup>ND</sup> EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

Deputy Chief (RA), CERC informed the EC members about the actions taken on various points in the minutes of 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting of EC and sought confirmation of the minutes placed before the Committee. After discussion, the minutes of 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting of EC were confirmed.

## **AGENDA ITEM 2: ACCOUNTS RELATED ITEMS**

### **(i) Budget for the F.Y. 2022-2023.**

1. Deputy Chief (RA), CERC apprised the salient features of the SAFIR budget for the F.Y. 2022-2023, including the projected income and expenditure. The Members were also apprised on the restoration of the membership fees for the F.Y. 2022-2023, due to depletion in the accumulated reserves of SAFIR.

2. Further, the Members were apprised that for the past few years, there was an ongoing issue with SAFIR's banker with regard to the validity period of the "No Objection Certificate" issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2010, for receipt of funds/membership fee from the Members Outside India (FCRA issue). This issue has been resolved by the bankers permitting SAFIR to receive funds into its FCRA account from Members outside India. Hence, SAFIR Sectt. will be issuing the previous years (viz. F.Y.s 2018-2019 & 2019-2020) invoices on its Members Outside India along with the invoice for the F.Y. 2022-2023.

3. Chairperson, CERC suggested that while the invoices are being issued, SAFIR Secretariat should ensure that the communication clearly indicates that the invoices were being raised for the past periods 2018-19 and 2019-20 (due to resolution of FCRA issues) while the membership fees were waived for 2020-21 and 2021-22 and new invoice was being raised for FY 2022-23

4. On the discussion of the Core Course which is held regularly by SAFIR in coordination with its Members, Member, PUCSL, Sri Lanka suggested to include Indian experience on the subjects of Multi Buyer model, Open Access, Power Exchange as these would be more relevant to Sri Lanka context. She further added that the Core course of SAFIR should also be imparted on the areas of the suggested topics to the participants from Sri Lanka.

With these observations, the Executive Committee approved the budget.

**(ii) Audited Accounts of SAFIR for the F.Y. 2021-2022.**

Deputy Chief (RA), CERC apprised the salient features of the Annual Accounts of SAFIR for the F.Y. 2021-2022. Thereafter, the Executive Committee approved the Annual Accounts of SAFIR.

**(iii) Membership withdrawal request from SAFIR members, viz. Sikkim State Electricity Regulatory Commission and Assam Electricity Regulatory Commission.**

1. Deputy Chief (RA), CERC apprised the EC that Assam ERC vide their letter dated 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2020 had requested for discontinuation of membership of SAFIR due to financial constraints. However, due to pandemic situation, SAFIR had decided that Assam ERC can continue the membership due to waiver of membership fees on account of pandemic for the F.Ys. 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. Further, she also informed the EC that Sikkim State ERC vide their letter dated 16<sup>th</sup> April, 2021 had also requested for discontinuation their membership of SAFIR.
2. The Members advised that SAFIR Sectt to ascertain from Assam & Sikkim State ERC regarding their decision on the continuation of membership of SAFIR.

### **AGENDA ITEM 3: ESCAP PROPOSAL FOR CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMS FOR REGULATORS IN SAFIR**

1. Dy. Chief (RA), CERC apprised the EC members about the proposal received from the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) Secretariat which is also one of the five regional commissions of the United Nations to conduct capacity building programs for SAFIR to support increased and sustainable power system connectivity – Phase I. She further informed that the trainings would be fully funded by ESCAP and that they had suggested training topics in Electricity trading in a multi-jurisdictional setting; Congestion management for cross-border electricity trading; transmission tariff setting in a regional market; Renewables integration and its impact on electricity systems and markets; End-user electricity tariffs and their affordability; regulatory governance of regional electricity markets etc.
2. The EC members observed that the topics suggested by ESCAP are relevant to the South Asian region and therefore, approved the proposal and directed SAFIR Secretariat to send a confirmation of the same to the ESCAP secretariat.

## **AGENDA ITEM 4: PLAN FOR F.Y. 2022-23**

### **(i) SAFIR Infrastructure Conference for F.Y. 2022-23**

1. Dy. Chief (RA), CERC updated the EC members about the SAFIR Infrastructure Conference which is conducted in association with multilateral organisations, thus being fully funded by them. She also informed the members that IRADe in association with USAID had been conducting the Infrastructure Conference under the SARI/EI program since 2016. Now, SAFIR Secretariat has been informed by IRADe that as the SARI/EI program will end in September 2022, further activities of the SARI/EI program will be carried out by the South Asia Regional Energy Partnership (SAREP) program, a newly launched USAID program from October 2022 onwards.

2. Member, PUCSL, Sri Lanka suggested that such conferences can include how Indian experience can be shared among the relevant Sri Lankan industries in addressing the Sri Lanka power sector issues at present. She also suggested that provincial regulators, utility industries and manufacturers may also take part in the conference. Additionally, she added that the conference can include Indian experience on the manufacturing of power industries so that the same could be shared among the relevant Sri Lankan industries. She added that India, Sri Lanka Grid interconnection is a proposed project to link the national grids of India and Sri Lanka. This is being implemented by Power Grid Corporation of India Limited and Ceylon Electricity Board. The connection will be developed in two phases, of which the first phase, scheduled to be completed in the near future, which will enable the transmission of 500 MW between the two countries. The second phase would enable a 1000 MW transmission capacity, the target capacity. Hence, such a connection between the two countries would enable the nations to sell excess energy, thus saving valuable resources. The EC members noted the suggestion.

### **(ii) Venue of Next ECM**

As regards conducting the next ECM, Dy. Chief (RA), CERC apprised the EC members that IICA has submitted a draft report on the SAFIR study on "Regulatory practices for Innovation: Cross Learnings from Infrastructure Sectors" which needs approval. Hence, the next ECM is being proposed to be conducted through online mode in July 2022.

At the end, the members noted that Mr. P. K. Pujari, Chairperson, CERC is due to retire on superannuation on 11<sup>th</sup> June, 2022 (this being his last Executive Committee meeting), and placed on record their deep appreciation for the valuable contribution of Mr. Pujari in the activities of SAFIR.

The meeting concluded with vote of thanks to the Chair.

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**ANNEXURE-I**

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS OF THE**  
**23<sup>RD</sup> EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING OF "SAFIR"**  
**HELD ON 08<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2022**

<b>S. NO.</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>ORGANIZATION</b>
01.	Mr. Samdrup K. Thinley CEO, BEA & Chairman, SAFIR	Bhutan Electricity Authority, Bhutan
02.	Mr. P.K. Pujari Chairperson, CERC	Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (India)
03.	Mr. Mohammad Abu Faruque Member, BERC	Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (Bangladesh)
04.	Ms. Chathurika Wijesinghe Member, PUCSL	Public Utilities Commission of Sri Lanka (Sri Lanka)
05.	Mr. Harpreet Singh Pruthi Secretary, CERC	Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (India)
06.	Dr. Sushanta K. Chatterjee Chief (Regulatory Affairs), CERC	Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (India)
<b>SAFIR SECRETARIAT</b>		
07.	Ms. Rashmi Somasekharan Nair Dy. Chief (Regulatory Affairs)	CERC, New Delhi (India)
08.	Mr. P.M. Antony Asst. Secretary	SAFIR / CERC, New Delhi (India)
09.	Mr. M.M. Prasad Sr. Accounts Officer	
10.	Mr. Nilesh Diwan Accounts Officer	SAFIR, New Delhi (India)
11.	Mr. Kushal Pal Research Associate	SAFIR, New Delhi (India)
12.	Mr. Somesh Gupta, Research Associate	CERC, New Delhi (India)
13.	Mr. Sushil Kumar Arora Administrative Officer	SAFIR, New Delhi (India)