

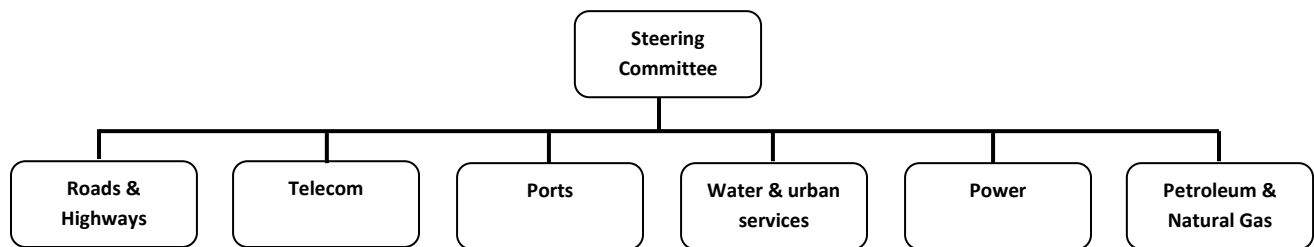
## A Concept Note on Virtual Working Groups (VWGs)

It was decided in the 16<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee Meeting of SAFIR to have virtual working groups on the SAFIR website. The virtual working groups would operate under the umbrella of SAFIR and will undertake joint analysis of a variety of regulatory topics and promote exchanges on training and education practices.

The Virtual Working Groups will work closely in coordination with each other with the purpose of formulating a set of conducive infrastructure policy initiatives/ regulations to be implemented by the government, industry and entrepreneurs in the South Asian region.

The groups envisage deliberation on various infrastructure issues to enhance awareness and could invite suggestions through SAFIR website from SAFIR members and other regulators. These working groups may give recommendations and a set of best practices rules/ procedures.

The virtual working groups will mainly work through electronic communication and through a dedicated area of the SAFIR website. There will be virtual working groups for six sectors i.e. Highways, Telecom, Ports, Water, Power and Petroleum & Natural Gas.



Every virtual working group would be led by the chair of that working group. The chair of each working group could be decided in Steering Committee meeting either based on some criteria or as decided among members. The chairmanship of each working group could be rotary in nature.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee Meeting of SAFIR, Water Supply Tariff Fixation Commission of Nepal and Petroleum & Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB), India volunteered to be the

lead regulatory bodies in the Water and Petroleum sector respectively. The working group could function in following manner:

- The topic/ issue to be discussed in working group may be proposed by the Chair of the corresponding working group. The selection & approval of an issue by the chair could be done by consensus and consultation among members of the group.
- Once a topic gets initiated than members can exchange their views and have discussions on that issue. The inputs of all the members could be available to all the members of the group.
- The members could upload related materials and working documents on the website by logging in by using their username and password.
- Virtual working group members can maintain contact and share documents and information by email.
- The timeline for each activity could be decided by chair in co-ordination with the members of the working group.
- All the inputs/ suggestions received on the issue could be compiled by the chair of the working group.
- The draft document could be made available on the website inviting comments of the working group members.
- The final document would be presented before the steering committee.
- The working group chair can maintain the extensive database of that sector with it. The other members may provide the documentary support to the chair of the group.

### **Virtual Meetings**

The working group members can also regularly interact/ meet with each other and with other steering committee members on their projects.

Meetings may happen as being convenient to all the members of the working group.

Working groups can use tele-conferencing facility for their meetings. It could provide an option for online chat, video conferencing/ call conferencing. The location and timing of the meetings should be set well in advance in order to ensure maximum participation.

The Chair Secretariat of corresponding working group would assist in arranging the virtual meetings and circulation of minutes of the meetings.

The Chairs of the remaining four virtual working groups have to be named. Each VWG could hold a virtual meeting to enable them to have a brainstorming session on the work plan for their VWG, with a view to presenting a draft to the steering committee.

### **VWG Chairs**

VWG 1: Roads & Highways

VWG 2: Telecom

VWG 3: Ports

VWG 4: Water & Urban Services – Mr. B.K. Man Singh (Chairman, Water Supply Tariff Fixation Commission, Nepal)

VWG 5: Power

VWG 6: Petroleum & Natural Gas – Mr. L. Mansingh (Chairman, Petroleum & Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB), India)

There would be some members and observers to all the groups as decided by the steering committee members among themselves.

The VWG meetings could be arranged by mutually deciding the date & time beforehand as per IST (Indian Standard Time).