

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE 14TH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING OF
SOUTH ASIA FORUM FOR INFRASTRUCTURE REGULATION**

Date: 25th NOVEMBER, 2017

Venue: WELIGAMA, SRI LANKA

The meeting was chaired by Mr Saliya Mathew, Chairperson, South Asia Forum of Infrastructure Regulation (SAFIR) & Public Utilities Commission of Sri Lanka (PUCSL). He extended a warm welcome to all members of the Executive Committee (EC). List of participants is enclosed at **Annexure-I**.

In his opening remarks, Shri Gireesh B Pradhan, Chairperson, Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC), India / SAFIR Sectt thanked Mr Saliya Mathew, Chairperson, SAFIR & PUCSL, Sri Lanka for the hospitality and excellent arrangements in hosting the 14th ECM of SAFIR in Sri Lanka and for the nearly full participation from all members of SAFIR except Chairperson, Water Supply Tariff Fixation Commission, Nepal. He stressed on the importance of SAFIR and its successful contribution to regional cooperation and sought for support and encouragement by the respective governments of the ECM members. He updated the members of the offer by Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA) to conduct the next Core Course. He also informed the ECM of the constitution of the Working Group of SAFIR in collaboration with IRADE and sought the endorsement of the ECM to go ahead with the activities of the Working Group. Chairperson, CERC also desired that SAFIR should take steps to convene the next SAFIR Infrastructure Conference through sponsorship as the previous conference was held in January 2016 in India with support of IRADE and USAID. He also brought to notice, the policy of SAFIR wherein the Chairmanship of SAFIR rotates among its ECM members on yearly basis. He felt that in order to have more continuity in taking agenda items forward and related decision making, it is proposed to increase the tenure of Chairperson, SAFIR to two years instead of one. Shri Pradhan also requested member countries to send physical hard

copies of any new Regulations / regulatory policies of their country to all the ECM members (as is being done by CERC now) as most of the times, checking the websites at all times is not convenient. This would enable analysis of the same by the ECM members. He also expressed his opinion of changing the logo of SAFIR keeping in line with changing times. Shri Pradhan in his concluding remarks also nostalgically observed that after taking over as Chairperson, CERC, he attended the first ECM in Sri Lanka and coincidentally, as he is demitting office in December, 2017, this is the last ECM of SAFIR being held in Sri Lanka. He once again lauded Chairperson, SAFIR / PUCSL for the excellent and well managed arrangements of the ECM and hoped that SAFIR will play an active role in the South Asian region to come up with road maps to take initiatives forward in future.

In his welcome address, Mr Saliya Mathew, Chairperson, SAFIR and PUCSL greeted all ECM members and remarked that with the exception of Nepal and Maldives, all ECM members have participated in this meeting. He expressed concern on the outstanding membership fees from the members of SAFIR and requested SAFIR Sectt to follow-up on the fees by personally visiting the member countries / organisations to update them on SAFIR and emphasise on the necessity of active participation from all members. Chairperson also expressed his happiness in hosting the ECM of SAFIR and updated the members that while PUCSL regulates the electricity sector, very soon, it will be also regulate the Petroleum and Water sector in Sri Lanka. He expressed his confidence that SAFIR will be able to make an impact on infrastructure regulation in South Asian region.

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

Agenda 1: Confirmation of the minutes of the 13th Executive Committee Meeting held on 12th May, 2017 at New Delhi, India.

The minutes of the 13th Executive Committee Meeting and Action Taken Report as circulated were confirmed, with the following directions: -

- a) SAFIR Secretariat to pursue with the members for the outstanding membership fees. With regard to the invoice for the membership fees 2017-18, the same must be issued as soon as the GST issues are settled.
- b) As regards seeking details of nodal officers for SAFIR Newsletter, SAFIR Secretariat was directed to pursue with the remaining members.
- c) SAFIR Sectt to follow up with ERC of Mongolia for collaboration with SAFIR.

Agenda 2: Approval and adoption of the Audited Accounts of SAFIR for the F.Y. 2016-17 and Budget for the F.Y. 2018-19

Dy Chief (RA), CERC / SAFIR Secretariat explained the salient features of the Balance Sheet and Income & Expenditure Account for the financial year 2016-17 (as per Annexure-II of the said Agenda). After discussion, the Annual Accounts of SAFIR for the financial year 2016-17 were considered and adopted.

The budget for the FY 2018-19, (as circulated) was discussed in detail with directions as given below:

- a) As regards the study to be conducted in SAFIR, SAFIR Sectt was directed to come up with probable topics and circulate the same amongst the ECM members for selection and concurrence before floating the Terms of Reference for the study.

- b) The EC members directed SAFIR Sectt to make a provision for the expense to be incurred in hiring the services of the consultant for addressing the GST issues in the budget for FY 18-19.
- c) The EC members approved in- principle for SAFIR to explore the services of multilateral agencies for retainership in SAFIR.

The EC approved the budget and advised to take it up for discussion in the Steering Committee.

Agenda 3: Outstanding membership fee from the members of SAFIR

The Members were appraised of the outstanding dues and action taken by SAFIR Sectt to followup for the same. SAFIR Sectt was directed to continue their efforts in seeking the membership fees and also personally visit the members to understand the issues for non-payment. As regards Members based in India, ECM once again reiterated that if the outstanding fees were not recovered, their membership could be terminated. ECM Member NEPRA, Pakistan was requested to offer their assistance for recovery of the outstanding dues from members based in Pakistan. In this regard, SAFIR Sectt was directed to share details of outstanding membership fees pertaining to members of Pakistan with NEPRA.

Agenda 4: Formation of Working Group to work on mediation for regulatory compliance to facilitate knowledge sharing addressing Cross Cutting Energy / Electricity Regulatory issues and capacity building in South Asia.

Dy Chief (RA), CERC / SAFIR Sectt updated the members on the status of the formation of the SAFIR Working Group and approval of the Terms of Reference (TOR) by Chairperson, SAFIR. The TOR has since been communicated to IRADe, the knowledge partner of SAFIR in the Working Group. It was also stated that SAFIR Sectt would be writing to member countries circulating the TOR and seeking nomination of

one senior official of their organisation to the Working Group after which the meetings of the working group can be convened.

Agenda 5: Outstanding issues arising from planned activities for 2017-18

There are no outstanding issues for the year 2017-18 as activities of SAFIR for the financial year FY 2017-18 is complete.

Agenda 6: Organising the Infrastructure Conference

It was decided that members can explore the possibilities of hosting the next Infrastructure conference and revert to SAFIR Sectt once finalised at their end.

Agenda 7: Status of collaboration between ERC of Mongolia and SAFIR

SAFIR Sectt was directed to correspond with ERC of Mongolia to take the collaboration forward.

Agenda 8: Plan of action for year 2018-19

- a) Next SCM and ECM of SAFIR: Chairperson, Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) offered to host the next ECM & SCM of SAFIR back to back in Dhaka, Bangladesh in May 2018 and sought assistance of SAFIR Sectt in organising the same. SAFIR Sectt was directed to seek the date from BERC and

also coordinate with BEREC on necessary arrangements for smooth conduct of the meetings.

- b) Next SAFIR Core Course: The ECM endorsed in-principle the offer by Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA) to conduct the next Core Course. SAFIR Sectt was directed to seek a proposal from IICA for conducting the Core Course in November 2018 in India. IICA may offer multiple venues to conduct the Core Course of which one venue can be finalised with due approval of Chairperson, SAFIR.

Mr Monowar Islam, Chairperson, BEREC thanked all ECM members of SAFIR for their cooperation including Chairperson, SAFIR / PUCSL for the arrangements made to convene and host the ECM. He also lauded Shri Gireesh B Pradhan, Chairperson, CERC for his leadership in all activities of CERC and SAFIR in the past. He also suggested the following for consideration of the ECM;

- a) SAFIR to have a vision statement;
- b) The profile of SAFIR along with its core functions, constitution etc can be printed in the form of a booklet;
- c) Increase the source of funding of SAFIR for specific programs by inviting support from multilateral agencies;
- d) SAFIR can take assistance of USAID / World Bank / Asian Development Bank to host the Infrastructure Conference and SAFIR Sectt may take steps to explore opportunities;
- e) The agenda for the SCM (which is to be held in Bangladesh) may include presentations from member countries on topics to be finalised by mutual consent.

Mr Syed Masood Ul Hassan Naqvi, Member, Consumer Affairs, NEPRA, Pakistan thanked all members of ECM for active participation in the meeting and looked forward to active cooperation among member countries. He thanked Mr Saliya Mathew, Chairperson, SAFIR / PUCSL for his hospitality in hosting the ECM.

At the end of the meeting, the ECM additionally concurred to the following:

- a) The Working Group of SAFIR in collaboration with IRADE may go ahead with its activities. All reports of the Working Group should be endorsed by ECM.
- b) The tenure of the Chairmanship of SAFIR would be increased to two years.
- c) The logo of SAFIR to be changed in line with the practice followed in CERC.
- d) Formulation of a vision statement for SAFIR.
- e) Printing the profile of SAFIR in the form of a booklet.

Dy Chief (Regulatory Affairs), CERC thanked the officials of PUCSL for their painstaking efforts in conducting the ECM and also the officials and staff of the SAFIR Secretariat for their arduous efforts in organizing the meeting.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

**List of Participants in 14th Executive Committee Meeting held at
Weligama, Sri Lanka**

- 1. Shri Saliya Mathew**
Chairperson
Public Utilities Commission of Sri Lanka
Chairperson, South Asia Forum for Infrastructure Regulation
- 2. Shri Gireesh B. Pradhan**
Chairperson
Central Electricity Regulatory Commission, India
- 3. Shri Samdrup K Thinley,**
Chief Executive Officer
Bhutan Electricity Authority, Bhutan
- 4. Shri Monowar Islam**
Chairperson
Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission, Bangladesh
- 5. Shri Syed Masood Ul Hassan Naqvi**
Member, Consumer Affairs
National Electric Power Regulatory Authority, Pakistan
- 6. Ms. Rashmi Somasekharan Nair**
Deputy Chief, Regulatory Affairs
Central Electricity Regulatory Commission, India