

# **MINUTES OF THE 21<sup>st</sup> EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING (ECM) OF SOUTH ASIA FORUM FOR INFRASTRUCTURE REGULATION (SAFIR)**

**Date: 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021; Monday**

**Virtual Meeting conducted through MS Teams**

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Md. Abdul Jalil, Chairperson, South Asia Forum for Infrastructure Regulation (SAFIR) & Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC). List of participants is enclosed at **Annexure-I**.

In his opening remarks and welcome address, Mr. Md. Abdul Jalil, Chairperson, SAFIR / BERC welcomed all dignitaries to the meeting. He expressed his gratitude and commitment to strengthen SAFIR and sought cooperation from all members for the same. He also wished good health and wellbeing of everyone in these times of Covid-19 pandemic.

In his address, Mr. P.K. Pujari, Chairperson, CERC India expressed bestwishes to all in these trying times. He also mentioned about the recent development on cross border trade in power exchanges in India. Nepal participated in the Day Ahead Market on the Indian Power Exchange for the first time. This was indeed an important milestone and he hoped that that more such transactions would be carried out in future on bilateral and multilateral basis.

In his address, Mr. Tauseef. H. Farooqi, Chairman of NEPRA, Pakistan expressed his pleasure to participate in the SAFIR ECM for the first time. He appreciated the fact that SAFIR has been contributing to greater cooperation and

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energy trade among the member countries of the region and added that he looked forward to a fruitful discussion in the meeting.

In his address, Mr. Samdrup Thinley, Chairperson, Bhutan Electricity Authority expressed his pleasure to interact with SAFIR Members through the virtual meeting.

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

**Agenda 1: Confirmation of the minutes of the 20th Executive Committee meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2021 through virtual conference.**

Dy. Chief (RA), CERC/ SAFIR Secretariat explained the action taken on various points earmarked for SAFIR Secretariat and sought for endorsement of the EC.

After discussion, the minutes of the 20th Executive Committee meeting were confirmed.

**Agenda 2: Accounts Related Matters**

**a. Budget for F.Y. 2021-2022**

Deputy Chief (RA), CERC apprised the salient features of the SAFIR budget, including the projected income and expenditure. The main points of discussion are as below:

- (i) It was apprised that during the 26th SCM of SAFIR held on 28th August, 2020, a moratorium of one year on the membership fees was approved by

the members in order to utilize the surplus accumulated in the FCRA Funds. Considering that the Forum continued to have sufficient reserves and added to the fact that all activities of SAFIR were being conducted through an online mode due to the pandemic, the budget proposed a further moratorium for the F.Y, 2021-2022 to all the Member organizations of SAFIR, so as to utilize the surplus accumulated in the FCRA Funds.

- (ii) The Members were apprised about the ongoing FCRA “No Objection Certificate” issue with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Government of India and the bankers of SAFIR. It has been informally ascertained that the FCRA NOC was not applicable to SAFIR. However, response from the bankers was awaited in this matter. Accordingly, once the response is received, pending invoices pertaining to members outside India for the previous years would be raised in the F.Y. 2021-2022.

After discussion, the budget for the F.Y. 2021-2022 was approved.

**b. Appointment of tax consultant for filing the Income Tax Return (ITR) for the F.Y. 2020-2021.**

**c. Appointment of consultant for filing the FCRA Return for the F.Y. 2020-2021.**

**d. Appointment of GST consultant for filing the GST Returns for the F.Y. 2021-2022.**

Deputy Chief (RA), CERC apprised that M/s MBR & Co. LLP, Chartered Accountants were appointed as the tax consultants of SAFIR to file its ITR, FCRA return and GST returns for the F.Y. 2019-2020, on retainership basis. However,

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owing to pre-occupation in various works, the CA firm has requested for withdrawal of their services with respect to filing the ITR, FCRA return and GST returns of SAFIR.

Thereafter, SAFIR Secretariat will initiate the process of sending quotations to the Chartered Accountant firms (on its panel & new firms) for the purpose of filing its ITR, FCRA return and GST returns and the tax consultant with the lowest quotation (i.e. L1) will accordingly be selected, on retainership basis.

The Members approved the same.

**e. Accounts related resolutions:**

The following accounts related resolutions were duly approved by Members:

- i) Resolution for applying for net banking facilities with Union Bank of India (erstwhile Corporation Bank) for viewing bank statements and payment of statutory dues.
- ii) Resolution for withdrawal/addition of Authorized Signatory(s) in the bank accounts of SAFIR.

**Agenda 3: Membership fees from SAFIR members for FY 2021-22**

Deputy Chief (RA), CERC apprised that as already informed while discussing the budget, no membership fee will levied for the F.Y. 2021-2022, owing to surplus

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FCRA funds. A decision on restoration of membership fee could be decided in the next SCM.

Further, the Members were apprised regarding the membership withdrawal request of Assam Electricity Regulatory Commission (request received in February, 2020, but allowed to continue their membership for F.Y. 2020-2021 as no membership fee was levied) and Sikkim State Electricity Regulatory Commission (request received in April, 2021). Chairperson, NEPRA, Pakistan opined that as no membership fee is levied for the F.Y. 2021-2022, the Members may be asked to continue and they may decide to withdraw next year, if the membership fees is levied. The Members agreed to this and directed SAFIR Secretariat to convey the decision of the EC to Assam and Sikkim SERC

Members were also apprised regarding the non-receipt of any formal communication from Electricity Regulatory Commission, Nepal regarding their induction as Member of SAFIR. Chairperson, ERC Nepal informed that in order to join as a Member of an International organization, approval is required from the Government of Nepal. However, the same is under process and he expects the approval to be received soon. The EC requested to convey the approval at the earliest so as to formally induct ERC of Nepal as a member of SAFIR.

#### **Agenda 4: Status update of planned activities of SAFIR for FY 2020-21 and proposal for 2021-22**

Deputy Chief (RA), CERC informed that as directed by the Executive Committee in its 20<sup>th</sup> meeting, SAFIR Secretariat. conducted the annual SAFIR

Core Course with Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad in March 2021 in coordination with Gujarat Electricity Regulatory Commission on a virtual mode. Further, the SAFIR Infrastructure Conference was held in March 2021 through video conferencing with support from USAID, SARI/EI and IRADe over 2 days with three working sessions.

The EC was also apprised that the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA) has been awarded the study on “Regulatory Practices for Innovation: Cross learnings from infrastructure sectors” and the same is to be completed in the FY 2021-22.

For FY 2021-22, the Executive Committee was informed that the next Core Course may be conducted in physical mode/ online mode based on the easing of restrictions on travel due to the pandemic and after soliciting proposals from Members. As done in the previous financial year, SAFIR Secretariat would assist the EC evaluate the proposals.

As regards conducting a study in FY 2021-22, it was informed that as the study has already been awarded to IICA, the same would be completed in FY 21-22 and hence, no new study is proposed in FY 2021-22.

The members were also informed that the SAFIR Infrastructure Conference for FY 2020-21 was held in collaboration with USAID/IRADE and SARI/EI. Based on the feedback, SAFIR Secretariat would coordinate with SARI/EI if they could support the next Infrastructure Conference in FY 2021-22.



The Executive Committee appreciated the works of SAFIR Sectt. and approved the proposals for FY 2021-22.

**Agenda 5: Next meeting of the Executive Committee**

Chairperson, CERC proposed that the next meeting of the Executive Committee may be held through video conferencing considering the pandemic and restrictions on travel. The proposal was agreed by all the members and SAFIR Secretariat was directed to check the suitability of time from all members and schedule the next ECM through video conferencing. The EC also noted that as Chairperson of PUCSL, Sri Lanka had proposed to conduct the ECM in physical mode. The same may be reviewed by the SAFIR Secretariat. In the later half of the year considering the prevalent situation. The same was agreed to, by the EC.

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

*Md. Abdul Jalil*  
06.05.2021

**Md. Abdul Jalil**  
Chairman, SAFIR and  
Chairman, Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission, Bangladesh





**List of participants in 21<sup>st</sup> Executive Committee meeting (virtual) held on 9th April 2021 through MS Teams**

1. **Mr. Md. Abdul Jalil**  
Chairman, SAFIR and Chairman  
Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission, Bangladesh
2. **Mr. P.K. Pujari**  
Chairperson  
Central Electricity Regulatory Commission, India
3. **Mr. Samdrup K. Thinley**  
CEO, Bhutan Electricity Authority, Bhutan
4. **Mr. Janaka Ratnayake**  
Chairperson  
Public Utilities Commission of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka
5. **Mr. Dilli Bahadur Singh**  
Chairperson  
Electricity Regulatory Commission of Nepal, Nepal
6. **Mr. Tauseef H. Farooqi**  
Chairperson  
National Electric Power Regulatory Authority, Pakistan
7. **Dr. Sushanta K. Chatterjee**  
Chief (Regulatory Affairs)  
Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) & SAFIR Secretariat, India
8. **Ms. Rashmi Somasekharan Nair**  
Deputy Chief (Regulatory Affairs)  
Central Electricity Regulatory Commission & SAFIR Secretariat, India
9. **Mr. Firoz Zaman**  
Deputy Director  
Bangladesh Electricity Regulatory Commission, Bangladesh



**10. Mr. Sanjeev Tinjan**

Assistant Chief (Regulatory Affairs)

Central Electricity Regulatory Commission & SAFIR Secretariat, India

**11. Mr. Ankit Gupta**

Research Officer

Forum of Regulators & SAFIR Secretariat, India

**12. Mr. Nilesh Diwan**

Accounts Officer, SAFIR Secretariat, India



