

Proceedings of the 2nd SEIAA-SEAC interactive meeting held on 25th June 2010

The 2nd interactive meeting of SEIAA and SEAC was held on 25.06.10 at 4 pm in the conference hall of SEIAA. Dr. C.R. Das, Chairman, SEIAA chaired the meeting.

1. At the outset, Prof. C.R Das, Chairman, SEIAA briefed on the necessity of the interactive meeting, following which Sri B. Behera, Member Secretary, SEIAA gave a short status of the project proposals dealt in by the SEIAA and SEAC as below:

a.	No. of proposals received by SEIAA till 10.06.10	120
b.	No. of proposals sent to SEAC	108
c.	No. of proposals lying with SEIAA due to wanting of information from the project proponent	12
d.	No. of proposals received back from SEAC	25
	1. Final recommendation for EC	12
	2. For exemption for EC as per EIA Notification dated 1.12.09	2
	3. For EIA/EMP report	10
	4. For treating as category 'A'	1

2. Prof G B N Chainy, Chairman, SEAC highlighted on the procedure for appraisal of the projects and stated that though the Appraisal Committee meetings are held regularly, there is inordinate delay in preparing the proceedings thereof. The main reason for this is due to the fact that the officers of SPCB, who are given responsibility to deal with the activities of SEAC, are busy other wise in their own works for SPCB and therefore are not able to afford adequate time for framing the TOR for the project proponents. He emphasized that steps be taken to sort out this problem forthwith. Dr. M Patra, Member, SEAC also emphasized this issue, giving an example. He indicated that the proceedings for a meeting held during the 2nd week of May was signed only on the 18th June 2010, by which more than a month is delayed for the finalization proceedings before the same are informed to the project proponents and the Authority. This created serious disruption to the stipulated time frame of the provisions of the Act. Mr. S N Das, Member, SEAC also spoke in the same line and expressed his concern over the matter. Prof. R.C Mohanty, Member, SEAC pointed out that since there is a budgetary provision to appoint one Environmental Scientist and one Environmental Engineer for SEIAA and SEAC, steps should be taken in this regard.

Sri B Behera, Member Secretary SEIAA, who is the Director-cum-Special Secretary to Government in the F&E Department, Odisha informed that as per the decision of the 1st SEIAA-SEAC inter-active meeting, a proposal was sent to the Govt. for the required manpower. Accordingly a Scientist of the SPCB has been entrusted to look after the SEAC affairs and steps are also being taken to strengthen the SPCB by providing more scientific staff so that handling of SEAC matter would be easier. And therefore fresh

appointment of scientist(s) at this stage for SEAC, in the opinion of the Government, may not necessary.

However, Dr. M Patra, Sri S.N Das and Prof. R.C Mohanty emphasized that since the work load for handling various projects have increased very much, it is difficult for one Scientist of SPCB to dispose the cases quickly. They pointed out that the State Govt. may again be moved citing cases of inordinate delay in disposal of the cases and requesting to reconsider the matter in view of the present situation.

After deliberations, it was decided that the State Govt. be moved to put these persons in place exclusively for the purpose early either by deputation or otherwise so that the project appraisal phase could be expedited and the stipulated time-frame can be stuck to.

3. Mr. S.N Das, Member SEAC discussed about various issues in granting EC to mining projects, especially two issues related to mining lease and extraction of ground water. Regarding the status of sanction of lease in favour of a mine owner, it was observed that many of the proponents did not indicate the validity of the mining lease in their project proposals clearly, as a result of which it often becomes difficult to take decision. He proposed that the State Govt. in Mining Department may be requested through the Principal Secretary/Director of Mines to furnish a detailed list of all mining leases issued to various mine owners in the State with periods of validity against each to ascertain the status of each such sanction of lease. It was agreed to by all members and it was decided to move accordingly.

Regarding extraction of groundwater, it was expressed that groundwater is proposed to be drawn indiscriminately in quantities and in regions, which is likely to have an adverse impact on the water environment. It was decided that the CGWB of the Government of India and the CGWI of the State Government may be involved in the matter to advice on the matter, for which they may be contacted.

4. Discussions were held on issuance of EC to housing and township builders. The SEAC members expressed that it was observed that some of the builders have started construction at their proposed sites before applying for EC to SEIAA, as noticed during their site visits. They do so after the approval of BDA for their construction plans, in violation to the EP Act. After deliberations, it was decided that a letter be written to BDA and the State Govt. in the Housing and Urban Development Department that BDA should make an inbuilt arrangement during the sanction of such projects that would clearly indicate that EC from SEIAA is mandatory before construction of such projects.

5. Sri P C Rath, Member SEIAA expressed that many large housing schemes are coming up in the state, in which the basic element of drinking water and wastewater infrastructure is not given due focus. The source of drinking water supply is often considered as groundwater, which is usually inadequate in the area. Similarly, package wastewater treatment plants are often proposed for the treatment of spent water, often incompatible with the size and nature of the project, as a result of which the water environment is likely to be seriously affected. Besides, the method of disposal of the effluent is also not well designed, as a result of which it is likely to result in flooding and submergence of areas. It was decided that the sanctioning authorities for such housing schemes, like the Development Authorities and the Odisha State Housing Board, should be requested to give specific attention towards adequate foolproof provision on water and wastewater arrangements of the schemes before according sanction. Further it was decided that the proponents be asked to explore the possibility of being connected to the

city water and sewerage systems through the competent authorities/city service providers before they consider of independent arrangements.

6. Sri P C Rath, Member SEIAA also expressed that it is very much necessary to scrutinize the basic requirements of a proposal to qualify for appraisal and examination by the SEAC and the SEIAA and subsequent sanction of EC. For this a check list at the initial stages of scrutiny by SEIAA would be very useful before a project is sent to the SEAC for appraisal. Mr. S N Das, Member of SEAC volunteered to prepare such a preliminary check list at the earliest.
7. Further improvement in the effective contribution by the SEIAA and the SEAC was also discussed. Dr C R Das, Chairman was of the view that the SEIAAs of the states like Punjab and Karnataka, which have been functioning right from their inception, have been doing well and are more organized. It was decided that he along with Sri P C Rath, Member may visit the two SEIAAs immediately to study learn lessons from their way of functioning so as to make the Odisha SEIAA more effective if possible.

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

Members Present

Er. P.C. Rath
Member, SEIAA

Dr. Surendra Nath Das
Member, SEAC

Dr. R.C Mohanty
Member, SEAC

Shri Bhagirathi Behera, IFS
Director, Env. - cum-Spl. Secy.
Member Secretary, SEIAA

Dr. S.P Rout
Member , SEAC

Dr. Maheswar Patra
Member, SEAC

Dr. C.R. Das
Chairman, SEIAA

Dr. G.B.N Chaini
Chairman, SEAC