Minutes of 1st Multi-Disciplinary Committee (MDC) Meeting of Luhri HEP (210 MW), SJVN

MDC Meeting: 1st
Date: June 17, 2025 (1130 hrs)
Venue: Conference Hall, Rampur HPS, Bayal
Attendance: Attached
Approvals/Consents for Minutes: Emails

The meeting commenced with a welcome address by LHEP, extending greetings to the Chairperson along with dignitaries/members. Further, providing an overview of the purpose of the MDC, constituted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC) in January 2025, in accordance with the conditions stipulated under the Environmental Clearance (EC) granted to the Project. Representatives from SJVN made a detailed presentation covering:

- Project overview and physical progress along with a documentary on Project
- Implementation status of Environmental Management Plan (EMP)
- Community development initiatives under Corporate Environment Responsibility.
- R&R / Issues

The details of agenda points along with decisions/action plans, due dates and responsibility centers is as under:

Agenda Point	Deliberations	Decisions/Actions Planned	Due Date	Responsibilities
1.	**DURING MEETING**			
	A. Catchment Area Treatment Plan It was apprised to the Committee that an amount of ₹20.63 crores has been utilized against the total allocation of ₹56.68 crores under the approved plan. However, certain key components—such as Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E), Eco-Battalion deployment, and Payment	i. It was decided to merge the Eco-Battalion head (₹56.68 lakh) and the Payment for Environmental Services (PES) head (₹5.66 crore) into the Joint Forest Management (JFM) head. Further, it was proposed that Mahila Mandals/ Yuvak Mandals may be engaged under	Update by next MDC	• Pr.CCF (HOFF) • DFO (Rampur) • DFO (Anni)

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	for Environmental Services (PES)—have shown no progress since the inception of the plan. The absence of an operational Eco-Battalion in the region and the non-utilization of PES funds were noted as matters of concern. In view of the above issues, and with the objective of ensuring effective utilization of funds and fulfillment of the plan's intended outcomes, the Committee discussed and adopted specific decisions, as detailed in the corresponding column.	the recently launched Rajiv Gandhi Van Samvardhan Yojana (RGVSY) to implement activities previously covered under these two heads. This is justified on two grounds that 1) Eco-battalions are not available in the region and it will be costly (both in terms of finance and time - to form them at this juncture) and 2) the intended purpose of afforestation with community involvement (as is the intent of the CAT plan document) will be well-served by dovetailing the two heads with JFM and utilizing the funds under the banner of RGVSY (Contributions of SJVNL under RGVSY will also be highlighted in spirit of decision under "Agenda Point 1 at E" of the Minutes). In addition, the concerned Divisions of Anni and Rampur can also work out a scheme of utilizing the PES head for forest fire mitigation with community support (by instituting transparent monetary incentives for communities who aid forest fire mitigation). ii. The Himalayan Forest Research Institute (ICFRE) may be formally engaged to undertake Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of the Catchment Area Treatment (CAT) Plan, ensuring		

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		professional oversight and scientific validation of the implementation. iii. The Committee recommended that the department may explore the option of hiring retired Revenue staff (one Kanungo and two patwaris – each for Anni and Rampur divisions) to strengthen Forest Protection efforts under the plan i.e. for survey and demarcation to construct the boundary pillars as envisaged under the plan. iv. To expedite utilization of the Research, Training, and Capacity Building budget, it was advised to organize additional exposure tours and training programs within India for relevant staff, focusing on best practices in environmental management and forest conservation. HFRI shall help the concerned Divisions to plan these tours. v. Further, representative of MoEF&CC suggested that geo-tagged photographs of all physical activities taken under CAT plan should be taken and inventory of the same shall be maintained.		
	B. Biodiversity Management Plan The Project Proponent (PP) informed the Committee that the EIA/EMP Report includes a	The Committee deliberated on the matter, and the Chairperson assured that the Biodiversity Management Plan—	July 31, 2025	• CWLW (Wildlife Wing-Forest)

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	detailed biodiversity conservation plan with a budgetary provision of ₹105 lakhs. Subsequently, following the issuance of the Environmental Clearance (EC), the requirement for a dedicated Wildlife Conservation Plan (WCP) for Schedule-I species was introduced and stipulated as a condition of the EC. In compliance, the Wildlife Conservation Plan was customized in FY 2021, incorporating specific measures for Schedule-I species and considering the inputs of the concerned Divisional Forest Officers (DFOs). However, limited progress occurred due to observations raised by the Chief Wildlife Warden's (CWLW) Office, which led to repeated revisions. Eventually, the plan was reviewed and submitted for approval in FY 2024. However, the draft was turned down citing the MoEF&CC's revised notification, which mandates that the Wildlife Management Plan should amount to 2% of the total project cost. It was emphasized that this 2% norm primarily applies to projects located within Protected Areas (PAs) or Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZs). The retrospective application of this guideline to the current project—which was granted EC in FY 2019 and is located far from any notified PA or ESZ—was considered disproportionate to the project's contextual requirements.	incorporating measures for Schedule-I species—would be finalized at the earliest, without mandating adherence to the 2% of Project cost provision.		• DFO (Rampur) • DFO (Anni) • DFO (WL), Sarahan • HOP (LHEP)

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	C. Muck Disposal at Shingapur The Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Kotgarh, apprised the Committee that an incident of unauthorized muck disposal along the Satluj River had been reported. An investigation conducted by the Senior Judge-cum-Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate (ACJM), District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), could not conclusively determine the agency/individual responsible for the muck dumping. However, considering the present condition of the site and in the interest of public welfare and environmental protection, the Head of Project, LHEP, was directed to undertake afforestation and fencing works at the identified location, as per the directive issued in the report dated 08 January 2024. It was noted that the site is yet to be restored in compliance with the ACJM's directions.	The Committee directed LHEP to comply the ACJM directions on a priority basis. Prior to execution, the Committee instructed LHEP, Director (HFRI), and DFO (Kotgarh) to have a detailed restoration plan prepared through the Himalayan Forest Research Institute (HFRI), Shimla. It was further noted that there are no CAT Plan provisions available under the LHEP with DFO (Kotgarh) for funding the preparation of the restoration plan. Therefore, the funds may be sourced under the "Research, Training & Capacity Building" head of the CAT Plan of LHEP, currently earmarked to DCF (Rampur) and DCF (Anni).	Update by next MDC	• DFO (Kotgarh) • DCF (Anni) • DCF (Rampur) • Director (HFRI) • HOP (LHEP)
	D. Energy/Fuel Consumption The Committee observed that the expenditure reported under the heads of Labour Welfare, Energy Conservation Measures, and Waste Management Plan appeared significantly low in comparison to the allocated budget of ₹235 lakhs. In particular, the low expenditure on energy usage raised concerns that labourers might be sourcing fuelwood from nearby forest areas.	The Committee instructed LHEP to review and update the expenditure records to accurately reflect the costs incurred on the free supply of fuel provided to labourers.	Update by next MDC	• HOP (LHEP)

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	In response, LHEP assured the Committee that a system of free fuel supply to labourers is already in place. It was noted that the expenditure incurred on providing fuel in labour messes may not have been fully captured or accounted for under the specified cost heads.			
	E. Acknowledgement to Project/SJVN for funding on CAT or CA plan or Other LHEP apprised the Committee that Project Affected Area residents have been raising concerns regarding the implementation of the said plans, particularly due to a lack of clarity on how, when, and where the allocated funds have been utilized. To address this issue initially, it was suggested that the works executed by the Forest Department may prominently acknowledge LHEP on the display boards installed at the respective work sites. This would help enhance transparency and improve public perception of the Project's contributions.	The Committee instructed both LHEP and the Forest Department to jointly address the concerns raised by the local community. LHEP was further directed to provide a suitable format for display boards, ensuring that necessary acknowledgments and details are appropriately incorporated by the Forest Department at work sites. Moreover, Project/Forest Dept. may explore the option of designing display board through students by organizing competition.	Update by next MDC	• DFO (Rampur) • DFO (Anni) • HOP (LHEP)
	F. Labourer's Pulmonary tests LHEP apprised the Committee that periodic blood tests and physical health check-ups are being conducted by M/s LHPC, the EPC contractor for the Project, as part of the occupational health monitoring program.	The Committee instructed LHEP to carry out peak flow rate assessments using a standard peak flow meter. The average peak flow rate should be determined from multiple readings recorded during the test. It was further advised that	Update by next MDC	HOP (LHEP)

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		results obtained during the pre-placement medical examination may be used as a baseline reference for the same individual, at the same altitude, during subsequent evaluations. Additionally, the Committee recommended respiratory system check-ups as part of routine health assessments.		
	G. **Monitoring of mitigation measures (EMP)** The Committee members emphasized the need for establishing a structured monitoring mechanism, wherein a comprehensive inventory of activities planned under various Environmental Management Plan (EMP) heads—along with their implementation status—is maintained. Such a mechanism would serve as an effective tool for the Multi-Disciplinary Committee (MDC) to systematically review and supervise the progress of environmental safeguard measures.	The Committee instructed LHEP to adopt a project monitoring tool, such as PERT (Program Evaluation and Review Technique), to systematically track and evaluate the progress of activities under various EMP heads. The implementation of such a tool will aid in effective planning, supervision, and timely execution of environmental mitigation measures.	Update by next MDC	• HOP (LHEP)
	H. **Engagement of Agencies in the Next MDC** The Committee emphasized the need to engage agencies with expertise in ecological studies and environmental monitoring. It was suggested that such agencies may be invited to participate in the next MDC meeting to provide independent insights and scientific assessment of the Project's environmental performance.	The Committee decided and instructed LHEP to engage relevant agencies undertaking ecological studies; monitoring environmental parameters; and executing EMP at the Project. Their involvement is expected to provide greater clarity on various environmental aspects of the Project. The Committee further advised that these agencies may	Update by next MDC	• HOP (LHEP)

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		be invited to participate in future MDC meetings through videoconferencing, where physical presence is not feasible.		
	I. **Expedite EMP expenditure** The Committee also acknowledged that certain Environmental Management Plan (EMP) components require greater and more focused attention. The relatively low financial expenditure under several EMP heads over the past five years was seen as indicative of limited progress in key environmental areas. In response, LHEP apprised the Committee that the majority of the EMP components are part of the contractual obligations assigned to M/s LHPC, the EPC contractor for the Project, and their implementation is being routed accordingly.	The Committee instructed LHEP to make sincere and focused efforts to ensure tangible progress under the various EMP heads. Further, representative of MoEF&CC suggested that geo-tagged photographs of all physical activities taken under EMP should be taken and inventory of the same shall be maintained.	Update by next MDC	• HOP (LHEP)
2.	**DURING SITE VISIT**			
	Despite inclement weather on the day of the visit, the MDC was able to get a brief overview of the Project from the designated viewpoint. Additionally, the Member from the Integrated Regional Office (IRO), MoEF&CC, conducted an independent visit to the project's muck disposal sites and labourers' camp in late afternoon.			
	A. Starting with Dumping Site-3 & 4, at Bithal it was observed these sites are to be restored.	Advised to restore dumping sites on priority as per Muck Management Plan. Regular monitoring and maintenance of protection/engineering measures of all dumping sites shall be ensured to prevent any spillage of muck into the River.	Update by next MDC	• HOP (LHEP)

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	B. It was also desired to share details of muck disposal along with capacities utilized dumping site-wise.	Sought tabular data from LHEP.	Immediate Action	• HOP (LHEP)
	C. Visited health facility at site and checked records and test reports, among other medical aspects.	Suggestion on pulmonary tests already covered under meeting (above).	-	-
3.	**SUGGESTIONS BY CHAIRPERSON** The Chairperson / Pr. CCF (HOFF) apprised the Committee that, as this was the first visit of the MDC, it provided an opportunity for all members to develop a basic understanding of the Project and its environmental dimensions. He emphasized that the MDC has a significant role in supervising and guiding the implementation of environmental mitigation measures at the Project. Accordingly, future meetings of the MDC will be more focused, with members expected to come well-prepared for technical discussions and assessments. The Chairperson showed concern over slow utilization of funds under CAT plan and EMP. Further it was advised to DFO concerned being major stakeholder to speed up implementing the CAT plan and EMP by LHEP in a timely manner. The Chairperson also expressed hope that the next visit would reflect visible progress on the suggestions and instructions issued during this meeting. In response, the Co-Chairperson / Head of Project (LHEP) assured the Committee of the Project's commitment to the recommendations and timely implementation of the discussed actions.			
Meeting ended with thanks to Chairperson and all members of MDC.				

11/7/25

(Member Secretary)
Multi-Disciplinary Committee,
LHEP-I, SJVN

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