

MINUTES OF MEETING OF EXPERT GROUP

AGENDA: Appraisal Of Social Impact Assessment Report regarding Land Acquisition for Ferozepur-Patti New Railway Line submitted by GNDU, Amritsar.

DATE: 06.10.2020, **TIME:** 11:30 a.m.

VENUE: Online video conferencing via link:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/79446467920?pwd=bU02SEZsR2F4dHFNYVNBR1NHWUtaZz09>

Members Present in the Meeting:

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| 1. Prof. Rajesh Gill | Chairperson |
| 2. Prof. Ramanjeet Kaur Johal | Member of Expert Group |
| 3. Sh. Sudesh Kaul | Member of Expert Group |
| 4. Sh. K.S. Sidhu | Member of Expert Group |
| 5. Sh. Ajay Sethi | Member Nagar Panchayat Mallanwala |
| 6. Sh. Mandeep Singh | Sarpanch Gram Panchayat Kale Ke Hithar |
| 7. Executive Engineer
Provl. Divn. PWD B&R Ferozepur | (Technical Expert) |
| 8. Prof. Rajesh Kumar | Associate Professor & SIA Project Coordinator,
GNDU, Amritsar |
| 9. Executive Engineer, | Const. Divn. No.2 PWD B&R Br. Amritsar. |
| 10. Representative on behalf of Deputy Commissioner Ferozepur. | |
| 11. Representative on behalf of Sub Divisional Magistrate -cum-LAC Ferozepur | |
| 12. Sub Divisional Magistrate-cum-LAC Zira | |
| 13. Sub Divisional Engineer | Provl. Sub Divn. PWD B&R Ferozepur |
| 14. Sub Divisional Engineer | Const. Sub Divn. Zira |
| 15. Division Superintendent | Provl. Divn. PWD B&R Ferozepur |
| 16. Sh. Gurinder Singh on behalf of Smt. Davinder Kaur Sarpanch Vill Mann | |
| 17. Sh. Avtar Singh, Sarpanch Mana ke Jand | |
| 18. Sh. Rajbir Singh, Sarpanch Talwandi Sobha Singh | |
| 19. Sh. Simritpal Singh, Sarpanch Talwandi Mastada Singh | |
| 20. Sh. Sher Singh, Sarpanch Kot Budha | |
| 21. Sh. Harpreet Singh, Sarpanch Kale Ke Uttar | |

Presentation of SIA Report:

The meeting was started by SIA Project Coordinator by all welcoming all the members of Expert Group, Officials of Punjab Government, Sarpanchs/Heads of concerned Villages/Nagar Panchayats. The SIA Report was presented by him in which the present members were apprised of the importance of project,

the demography, geography etc of the project affected area, the concerns of the project affected families etc. The presentation of SIA Report was concluded by him stating that the project is of high importance to public and a large population of country will be benefitted by the project.

Nature of land being acquired:

It was asked by Sh. K.S Sidhu, Member of Expert Group to specify the nature of land being acquired. SIA Project Coordinator responded by stating that the land being acquired is fertile & crop is standing on whole of the land.

Difference between the compensation expected & compensation likely to be given by Govt.:

It was pointed out by Sh. K.S Sidhu, Member of Expert Group that the SIA Report mentions that there will be compensation being demanded by the land owners & Compensation likely to be paid by Govt. but this point should be omitted from the report because this issue is under the purview of concerned Land Acquisition Collector & not under the purview of Expert Committee. SIA Project Coordinator responded by stating that the SIA Report describes the expression of concerned land owners which was observed by SIA Team during public meetings & personal interactions.

Sh. Ajay Sethi, Member of Nagar Panchayat Mallanwala Khas requested the committee to let him know about the amount of compensation likely to be paid to land owners for land acquisition. The Chairperson responded by stating that this issue is under the purview of concerned Land Acquisition Collector & not under the purview of Expert Committee & the government will take necessary action according to RFCTLARR Act 2013.

Employment opportunities for Project Affected Families:

It was observed by Prof. Ramanjit Kaur Johal, Member of Expert Group that Project Affected Families are likely to lose employment due to the project and they must be adequately be provided alternative employment by the authorities. SIA Project Coordinator responded by stating that the width of land being acquired is approximately 10 to 20 meters only due to which the land owners can continue to cultivate both sides of railway track, however, subject to some difficulties viz movement from one side of the railway track to another side & vice-versa will not be possible without adequate provisions provided by railway authorities while laying the railway track. It was also stated by SIA Project Coordinator that the project will increase business opportunities, setting up of warehouses/industries etc, skill development courses etc due to the fact that the travelling is likely to become much easier after the project completion.

Opting for the best possible alignment:

SIA Project Coordinator was asked by the Chairperson to inform the members whether the proposed alignment is the best possible option or not. SIA Project Coordinator responded by stating that the proposed alignment is the best possible route for the railway line. It was also stated by SIA Project Coordinator that the alignment of railway track is planned by concerned authorities in such a way that except for 7-8 residential/commercial buildings, no other buildings lies within the alignment due to which the affect of rehabilitation & resettlement is minimized.

Participation of women in preparation of SIA Report:

It was asked by Prof. Ramanjit Kaur Johal, Member of Expert Group to inform about how much was the participation of local women with the SIA Team during public hearing and personal interaction. SIA Project Coordinator responded by stating that the participation of local women with the SIA Team was very less due to the fact that most of the concerned land owners were male.

Localities of Mallanwala Khas cheated by fraudster:

Sh. Ajay Sethi, Member of Nagar Panchayat informed the members that a fraudster cheated several localities of Mallanwala Khas area claiming to be a railway official. Sh. K.S Sidhu, Member of Expert Group asked concerned SDM to take necessary action & requested Sh. Ajay Sethi to lodge an FIR against the concerned person. SDM-cum-LAC Zira responded by stating that the issue has come to his notice for the first time and necessary action will be taken.

Reactions by Small Farmers/Land Owners:

Chairperson asked SIA Project Coordinator about the reaction of Small Farmers/Land Owners to the land acquisition being done. SIA Project Coordinator responded by stating that almost all of the localites including small farmers/land owners are encouraged and happy with the project and the land acquisition involved.

Water Logging due to the railway track/bridges:

Sh. Mandeep Singh, Sarpanch Gram Panchayat Kale Ke Hithar pointed out that the project is likely to cause water logging in the areas adjacent to the railway track and the railway bridge and the issue must be properly handled. SIA Project Coordinator responded by suggested that the issue must be taken care of by Railway Authorities by constructing adequate cross drainage works. Executive Engineer, Provl. Divn.

PWD B&R Ferozpur suggested that that the issue should be taken care of by the concerned Railway Authorities while preparation of DPR and execution of the project.

Small piece of land left over due to crossing of Railway Line across the originally owned land:

Chairperson stated that whenever a small piece of land is leftover due to crossing of Railway Line across the originally owned land, it becomes liability of land owner and is not of much use to him/her, which must be compensated adequately by the government. Sh. K.S Sidhu, Member of Expert Group suggested that, some additional compensation, in addition to the traditional compensation may be given to land owners in such cases. Chairperson also suggested that small pieces of land in such cases may also be acquired by the Government.

Time line to be made available to the Public:

Sh. K.S Sidhu, Member of Expert Group suggested that a timeline, depicting the time of acquiring the land and the time of completion of project, should be made available to people. Also budget provision should be made by the Government for the project, if not made yet.

Acceptance of the SIA Report:

Expert Group commented that the report may be adopted along with the following recommendations:

- i.) Small pieces of land, left over after land acquisition, if less than one acre, may be acquired, so as to mitigate the deprivation of affected farmers.
- ii.) Necessary remedial measures may be taken to address the issue of water logging in the affected area after the railway tracks are laid down, in order to save the affected families from suffering.
- iii.) Once the railway tracks are laid down and the related infrastructure is built up, younger population amongst the affected families may be considered for jobs etc. on preferential basis.
- iv.) SDM/ Local administrative authorities, Mallanwala Khas to lodge and FIR immediately against the concerned person in the case of cheating and fraud committed against various families of the village, as reported by Mr. Ajay Sethi, Member of Nagar Panchayat, and initiate enquiry to save the image of Government agencies involved in Land Acquisition process.
- v.) The whole process of completing the project must be followed in a specified timeline, to minimize the adverse effect on the project affected families.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to the chair.