

Gujarat Electricity Regulatory Commission Gandhinagar

Minutes of the 23rd meeting of the State Advisory Committee held on 23-01-2017 at Conference Room, GERC, Gandhinagar.

The meeting was chaired by Shri Anand Kumar, Chairman, GERC. Hon'ble Chairman welcomed all the Members of State Advisory Committee and other participants. Being a first meeting under Chairmanship of Shri Anand Kumar, it was started with a brief introduction of all the participants.

In the opening remarks, Hon'ble Chairman emphasized that according to the Electricity Act, 2003, the objective of the State Advisory Committee is to advise the Commission on policy, quality, continuity and extent of service provided by the licensees, protection of consumer interest etc.

After brief introduction and opening remarks, regular agenda items were taken up for discussion.

Agenda 1: Approval of the minutes of the 22nd meeting of the SAC.

The minutes of the 22nd meeting of the SAC held on 24-02-2016 were circulated among the members of the SAC vide letter dated 22-03.2016. As no comments have been received, the Committee approved the minutes.

Agenda 2: Action Taken Reports.

Issue 1- Guidelines for information to Farmers for Crop burning insurance scheme- claim filing procedure.

All the four distribution companies- UGVCL, DGVCL, MGVCL and PGVCL submitted their action taken report in connection with the circulation of information as well as guidelines for lodging crop burning insurance claims. While reviewing the number of cases registered and settled under crop compensation insurance scheme, it is observed by the members of the committee that the out of 207 cases registered in DGVCL area, only in one case compensation is received and 131 cases are rejected. It was felt that detailed analysis is required to find out the reasons for rejection of high number of cases especially in DGVCL area. Accordingly, DGVCL was requested to carryout detailed analysis in this regard and provide a report highlighting the reasons for such high rate of rejection and how they propose to address the same.

(Action- DGVCL)

Issue 2- Common format to report Maintenance activities

All the four distribution companies- UGVCL, DGVCL, MGVCL and PGVCL submitted report on Maintenance activities and UGVCL has submitted the common format for ideal village.

It was decided that all distribution companies are required to submit the six monthly progress on maintenance activities in the format suggested by UGVCL.

(Action- All Discoms)

Issue 3- Quality of Earthing

All the four distribution companies- UGVCL, DGVCL, MGVCL and PGVCL reported that they are carrying out quality checks for the earthing work as required and discussed in the SAC meeting. Hon'ble Chairman suggested that over and above quality checks by the Distribution Companies, the office of the Electrical Inspector is also required to carry out the sample checks for the effective earthing at consumer premises as well as in the Distribution system. Hon'ble Chairman asked Office of the Chief Electrical Inspector to place latest Safety Regulations on its website.

(Action- Office of the Chief Electrical Inspector)

Issue 4- Awareness campaign for Safety

All the four distribution companies- UGVCL, DGVCL, MGVCL and PGVCL submitted detailed report on this activity and SAC members have taken note of it.

Issue 5- Adoption of RF metering system

GUVNL has submitted detailed report on experience of RF metering system in DGVCL and UGVCL area. It was learnt that there are various difficulties in adoption of RF metering system. At present the discoms are using GPRS technology for meter reading and billing. The SAC members have taken a note in this regard.

Issue 6- Pending Agricultural Connections

MGVCL reported that few applications of 2011 are pending in Dark Zone area and at present work is going on for the applications received during 2012.

DGVCL reported that they have cleared backlog of applications received till 2015 and only few applications (about 164) are pending in Dark Zone area.

PGVCL reported that they are releasing about 40,000 connections every year, but due to large backlog still applications from 2009-10 onwards are pending. Moreover, every year about 30,000 plus new applications are received.

UGVCL reported that at present work is going on for the applications received during 2012.

SAC members observed that due to quota allocated to all Distribution Licensees for processing applications of Agricultural Connections, there is difference in backlog i.e. in PGVCL area, applications received during 2010 are pending while in DGVCL area application received in 2015 are cleared. GUVNL has clarified that the quota for PGVCL area is increased in proportion to its backlog and within next year, it is planned to clear the applications received in 2013. GUVNL also shared their experience in Solar Co-operative system for Agricultural consumers.

Issue 7- Charges for shifting of meter in same premises.

It was reported that the charges for shifting of meter in same premises are rationalised and made effective in accordance with the GERC directive ref no. GERC/Tech/2016/665 dated 14-04-2016.

Issue 8- More than one Agricultural connection in the same survey number.

It was clarified that this issue is resolved as the State Government has issued necessary guidelines in this regard and GUVNL clarified that they have initiated action in this regard and public advertisement also given in newspapers for implementation.

Issue 9- Orders issued by CGRFs and Ombudsman should be reasoned Order.

All the Distribution Companies reported that they are monitoring/ reviewing the Orders issued by its CGRFs and necessary instructions are also given for issuing reasoned Orders. Electricity Ombudsman also reported that they are issuing reasoned orders. The SAC members have taken note of it.

Issue 10- Refund of excess Security Deposit through Cheque

All the Distribution Companies reported that they have laid down the procedure for refund of excess Security Deposit in accordance with the GERC Regulations and a separate letter is being issued to the consumers for his information and accounting purpose about refund of security deposit.

Issue 11- Standard of Performance and Monitoring Reports of CGRF

The latest details were circulated as part of Agenda note for the information of SAC members.

Issue 12- Tripping of Transmission Lines feeding to Traction Substations.

GETCO reported that all the electricity supply system to Traction substations is getting supply from two sources as redundancy is already built up to take care of requirement of Railways. Hence, electricity supply is not affected due to tripping or defect in one transmission feeder.

GETCO further submitted that Railway authorities are taking their own time for conveying approval whenever GETCO is carrying out maintenance activities, laying new lines or shifting existing lines. Railway block is required for such activities and requested Railway Authority to provide block at the earliest.

Western Railway reported that there is very high number of tripping instances for Anand feeder.

Issue 13- Levy of property tax on Electricity Network

E & P Department (EPD) reported that the matter was examined by the State Government and found that in case of exemption of property taxes to electricity licensees, there may be similar request from other sectors, which may adversely affect the revenue of the Local Bodies. However, the EPD asked Torrent Power Limited to provide details related to impact on electricity tariff in case of exemption from payment of the property tax for further examination.

(Action- Torrent Power)

Agenda 3: Issues represented by Members

Issue 1- Review of Different Tariff for Agricultural Consumer

Shri Kirtibhai J. Amin pointed out that at present different types of tariff are applicable to agricultural consumers. He mentioned that for the Agricultural Consumers, there should be uniform tariff. GUVNL informed that different types of tariff e.g. BHP tariff, metered tariff and tariff applicable to tatkal consumers are in practice in accordance with the policy implementation requirement. It was informed that the Commission has decided tariff of Rs. 2400/- per HP per annum. However, it is the State Government who decided to subsidise the Agricultural Consumers segregating into two categories viz. upto 7.5 HP and Above 7.5 HP by deciding lower tariff for them. Hon'ble Chairman suggested that the different tariffs applicable to agricultural consumers will be reviewed at the time of determination of tariff for Distribution Companies.

Issue 2- Replacement of very old lines and network in Rural area.

Shri Kirtibhai J. Amin pointed out that the Discoms are carrying out regular maintenance and replacement of lines/network activities in Urban area, but same is missing in Rural areas. GUVNL clarified that the replacement of network and lines is carrying out on the need basis. Further, it was also clarified that replacement of network in specific areas e.g. coastal/ chemical zone etc. is being carried out regularly. GUVNL further informed that a study is being conducted at present wherein replacement of network according to its age is contemplated and as per the rough estimate an expenditure of about Rs. 750 crore is involved.

Issue 3- Estimate for new HT connection on per kVA basis

Representative of Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCI) submitted that it is required to implement the per kVA basis estimate for new HT connection in line with the LT consumers. At present, there is wide variation in the estimated charges for new HT connections. After discussion, it was decided to study in detail the present arrangement of preparation and recovery of estimated charges for new HT connection. Torrent Power Limited has expressed its willingness to study the implementation of the recovery of per kW charge for new HT connections having Contract Demand less than 1MW and place its report to GERC.

(Action- Torrent Power and GERC office)

Issue 4- Undergrounding and Strengthening scheme for Industrial areas

GCCI represented that the Discoms should explore possibilities of implementation of underground network schemes in Industrial areas on the lines of IPDS. GUVNL has clarified that they are in process of implementing separate improvement schemes on cost sharing basis for the Industrial areas.

Issue 5- Supply to Agricultural consumers for 12 to 14 hours on need basis

Shri Maganbhai Patel represented that a permanent arrangement is required to be devised for 12 to 14 hours electricity supply to needy agricultural consumers. He also represented that as far as possible electricity be supplied to Agricultural consumers during daytime only. GUVNL informed that in case of requirement and on the representation of the farmers, there is a practice to supply electricity for more than 8 hours. Further, in view of the load pattern and the technical requirements to run generating station on continuous basis, it is required to roaster the supply to Agricultural consumers.

Issue 6- Checking of Agricultural consumers

Shri Maganbhai Patel pointed out that certain difficulties are being faced by the farmers in connection with the vigilance checking and assessment for Agricultural consumers. It was clarified that in recent amendments of Electricity Supply Code, most issues are resolved.

Issue 7- Harassment to farmers while constructing new lines

Shri Maganbhai Patel pointed out recent incident of harassment to farmer by GETCO while erecting new lines. GETCO explained that some times farmer is not accepting the compensation as ordered by the District Collector and not allowing GETCO to lay the lines. However GETCO assured that they will check the specific incident.

Issue 8- To allow Vanvasi to use single-phase motor/pump

Shri Maganbhai Patel informed that there are few instances where 'Vanvasis' have used single-phase small water pump from lighting connection, but Distribution Companies are taking penal action against them. The Discoms clarified that due to technical load limit on SDT, usage from such feeders is required to be restricted to lighting use only.

Issue 9- Slow Server at PGVCL

Representative of Rajkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) informed that the server at PGVCL office is very slow and due to this, various consumer services are affected adversely. They have represented this matter to authority from time to time since last two years but no action is taken so far. GUVNL assured that the problems related to slow server will be resolved within 2 months.

Issue 10- Poor Quality of Service wire.

RCCI represented that the quality of service wire is very poor. PGVCL clarified that they are using 2 core aluminium wire for load requirement upto 2 kW only, which is sufficient. In case of higher load requirement, they are using four- core wires. However, RCCI may bring to the notice of PGVCL any specific cases related to poor quality of wires.

Issue 11- Simple forms for application and no charge for online payment.

RCCI requested that the application forms for new electricity supply/ other service requirements can be made more simpler and digital. Further there should not be any additional charges for online payment. It was discussed that the issues related to amendments in Electricity Supply Code are required to be

deliberated in the Supply Code Review Panel. It was also clarified that for online payment some of the payment gateways are charging nominal fees, which is not part of Discoms revenue.

Issue 12- Power Supply to Western Railway under Open Access arrangement

SLDC informed that the Western Railway after getting the status of deemed Distribution Licensee opted for electricity supply arrangement from RGPPL. In case of outage of RGPPL, the RLDC revises the schedule for WR to zero, but being essential services, WR continues to draw power from Gujarat system. It is required for WR to make alternate arrangement / fall back arrangement of power supply. Accordingly SAC request WR to initiate action in this regard.

(Action- Western Railway)

Issue 13- Pending work of GETCO for Railway Crossing

GETCO reported that about 35 railway crossing work are pending for the approval from Railway Authority. GETCO requested that Committee may ask WR to expedite the approval work and if possible, GETCO and WR can mutually decide online monitoring of approval work. Torrent also submitted that they too are facing similar issues with WR. The matter was discussed and Committee requests WR to assist GETCO and Torrent in the matter of getting timely approval of the railway crossing work.

(Action- Western Railway)

At the end of meeting, Committee Members were appraised about recent Regulations notified by the Commission and shared details with them about filing of MYT petitions by the Licensees and hearing schedule for MYT petitions.

The Committee Members also resolved to meet regularly, preferably on quarterly basis and proposed to hold next meeting during May 2017.

Roopwant Singh
SECRETARY
GERC, Gandhinagar

List of Participants in 23rd meeting of SAC held on 23-01-2017 at GERC, Gandhinagar

Members Present:

1. Shri Anand Kumar, Chairman, GERC, Gandhinagar
2. Shri K. M. Shringarpure, Member, GERC, Gandhinagar.
3. Shri P. J. Thakkar, Member, GERC, Gandhinagar.
4. Shri Dilip Raval, Electricity Ombudsman, Ahmedabad
5. Shri Maganbhai Patel, Bhartiya Kisan Sangh, Gandhinagar.
6. Shri Kirtibhai Amin, President, Pradesh Kisan Vikas Sangh, Patan
7. Shri Yudhisthir Gohil, Gujarat Chamber of Commerce & Industry, A'bad.
8. Shri Shivlal S. Barasiya, Rajkot Engineering Industries Association, Rajkot.
9. Shri N. Dinker, Vadodara
10. Dr. M. K. Shah, ERDA, Vadodara.
11. Ms. Poonam Patel, Chief Adm. Officer, IRMA, Anand
12. Shri M. C. Meena, CEE, Western Railway
13. Shri Pankaj Joshi, MD, GUNVL, Vadodara.
14. Shri K. H. Chorera, OSD, EPD, Sachivalaya, Gandhinagar.
15. Shri P. R. Dahake, MD, GSECL, Vadodara
16. Shri S. K. Negi, MD, GETCO, Vadodara.
17. Shri B. A. Shah. MD, UGVCL, Mehsana
18. Ms. Ardra Agarwal, MD, DGVCL, Surat
19. Shri Rajesh Manjhu, MD, MGVCL, Vadodara
20. Shri H. R. Suthar, MD, PGVCL, Rajkot.
21. Shri Jinal Mehta, MD, Torrent Power Limited, Ahmedabad.
22. Shri B.B. Mehta, Chief Engineer, State Load Dispatch Centre, Vadodara.
23. Smt. Alpana Dani, Office of the Chief Electrical Inspector, Gandhinagar
24. Shri N. C. Bhuptani, GEDA, Gandhinagar