

Media Response

Project: Mong Ton Hydropower Project, Myanmar
Date: 18 June 2015
Organisation: Business & Human Rights Resource Centre
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SMEC's Response

Mong Ton Hydropower Project:

The proposed Mong Ton Hydropower Project is located in Myanmar. The objective of the Project is to improve both the capacity and reliability of electricity throughout Myanmar. If the Project proceeds, the hydropower plant will produce more than 34 billion KW hours of electricity annually. Electricity generated will first meet local demands, and surplus electricity will be sold to neighbouring countries, providing a revenue stream for the Government to invest in the local economy.

SMEC's Role on the Project:

SMEC has been engaged as an Independent Technical Consultant responsible for undertaking an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Social Impact Assessment (SIA) for the Project. SMEC is collecting and reporting the facts, both positive and negative, from a neutral perspective. It is not SMEC's role to provide recommendations as to whether the Project should proceed. The findings of the EIA/SIA will be presented to the Government of Myanmar, who will decide (with other sources of information) whether to proceed with the Project.

SMEC's aim is to conduct an EIA/SIA process that is inclusive, constructive and transparent. Stakeholder consultation is an essential element of the process, and the objective of our team is to provide a balanced perspective of the Project and encourage stakeholders to actively participate in the consultation process. Disruption to the EIA/SIA process has the potential to adversely affect local communities, as their genuine concerns may not be able to be documented. Contrary to media reports, SMEC has tried to engage with local Civil Society Organisations on numerous occasions, with limited success. Our EIA/SIA team will continue to present invitations to stakeholder groups to discuss the details of the Project at a mutually convenient time and place.

As the EIA / SIA consultation process for this project is one of the first to be conducted to international standards in Myanmar, the Project is attracting a great deal of scrutiny. SMEC has invested in the skills development of local employees to ensure they understand the basis of an objective EIA/SIA process and are carrying it out in line with best-practice.

SMEC's Position on Bribery & Corruption:

SMEC's policies expressly prohibit bribery in all of our business dealings, which we define as giving or receiving an undue benefit (including payments and gifts) to influence behaviour and obtain commercial advantage. This prohibition applies to parties who deal with others on behalf of SMEC. There has been no breach of these policies on the Mong Ton Hydropower Project.