



23.6.2021

Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention)

Minutes of the consultation meeting 8 June 2021 on EIA of 400 kV powerline between Keminmaa-Tornionjoki concerning transboundary environmental impacts

Time:	8 June 2021, 9–11 am Sweden/ 10–12 am Finland Teams
--------------	--

Minutes

1. Opening and purpose of the meeting

The Chair opened the meeting and stated that meeting is arranged in the context of Article 5 of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention). The consultation meeting was organized due to Sweden's comments on the EIA documentation and the following competent authority's reasoned conclusion (*perusteltu päätelmä* in Finnish / *motiverad slutsats* in Swedish). Sweden was of the view that the EIA in Finland did not take sufficiently into consideration the received comments concerning landscape and cultural environment. Focus of the meeting is therefore to agree what additional information is still requested by Sweden, what is the timeframe and the procedure for providing this information.

2. Participants

The participants introduced themselves.

3. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted. It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting would be drafted by Piia Kähkölä from the Finnish Ministry of the Environment and that the draft minutes would be circulated to the participants with an indicated deadline for comments. The participants were asked to circulate their comments to all participants. It was proposed and agreed that the meeting language would be English, also Swedish could be used.

4. Present status of the project

- *Status of the EIA and Espoo Convention*

Leena Ruokanen (Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment in Lapland) gave a presentation on the status of the EIA procedure in Finland. The competent authority has given the reasoned conclusion in May 2020 and that the summary of the document had been sent to Sweden. EIA procedure will continue to the permitting procedures.

Minna Torkkeli (Ministry of the Environment) gave a short introduction of what had been done in the context of the Espoo Convention. It was stated that the Finnish Ministry of the Environment as the competent authority of the Espoo Convention had sent the scoping document and the EIA documentation to Sweden for comments and delivered the received comments to Lapland's ELY-centre.



The reasoned conclusion had been sent to Sweden, to which a response was received stating that the transboundary impacts on landscape and cultural environment were not sufficiently recognized and that there was a need to continue the Espoo Convention consultations.

- *Status of project planning, permits, connections with continuing powerline Tornionjoki-Messaure*

Keijo Välimaa (Fingrid Oyj) and Matilda Björkheden (Svenska Kraftnät) gave a presentation on the status of the planning of the project both in Finland and in Sweden (see Annex 1). The joint initiative of Svenska kraftnät and Fingrid is called Aurora line.

There were no questions or discussion regarding agenda item 4.

5. Specific issues addressed by Sweden in its comments to Finland

- *Sweden*

Jens Haapalahti (County Administrative Board in Norrbotten) clarified that there was a need for visualisation of the impacts on landscape and cultural environment, especially taking into account the village of Bäckesta. As Åsa Algotsson, who had been mainly responsible for the comments of the County Administrative Board in Norrbotten, was not present at the meeting, it was not at this point possible to state specifically the needs for new assessments.

- *Developer's response*

Mika Penttilä (Fingrid Oyj) invited Veli-Markku Uski (Sitowise) from the consultant to present the developer's plan to complement the assessment regarding impacts on landscape and cultural environment. Veli-Markku Uski gave a presentation on the planned additional assessment (see Annex 2). Åsa Algotsson from the County Administrative Board in Norrbotten joined the meeting during Uski's presentation.

- *Discussion*

It was agreed that the original EIA material did not include information on whether and to what extent the project would affect the landscape and cultural environment taking into account the village of Bäckesta. Haapalahti and Algotsson welcomed the developer's plan to prepare additional information and complement the assessment, especially the plan to prepare a photo series demonstrating the impact of the power line and its corridor to the landscape. It was stated that the County Administrative Board in Norrbotten would share its digital material from the area to the developer, which was needed for the assessment. It was agreed that the County Administrative Board in Norrbotten and the developer would continue the discussions concerning the sharing of this material bilaterally. Leena Ruokanen and Teija Ylimartimo (Tornionjokilaakson museo/Tornedalens museum) complemented that it would be good to have photo material and impact assessment also from the river from the fishermen's perspective and from the river valley.

Minna Torkkeli explained the continuation of the process in Finland. She stated that as the Ministry of the Environment is the competent authority of the Espoo Convention and the reasoned conclusion is already given, Fingrid would provide the additional material directly to the Ministry, after which it will send the material to Sweden for comments. If there are no further requests, the consultation of the project is regarded concluded. After this the Ministry will provide all the documents concerning the consultation (including Sweden's response to the request of additional consultation, the minutes of this Consultation meeting and the final letter from Sweden) to Lapland's ELY-centre and to the developer and also for information to the authority in charge of the decision making. After having received Sweden's response



the developer is expected to ask the ELY-centre to express its views on whether the reasoned conclusion is still up to date.

6. Adoption of conclusions

It was concluded that

- the developer would proceed with the plan (see Annex 2) presented to the meeting participants
- the developer and the County Administrative Board in Norrbotten would continue bilateral conversations concerning the sharing of digital material
- the developer would deliver the additional material to the Finnish Ministry of the Environment by mid-September 2021
- the Finnish Ministry of the Environment would send the material to the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency for comments with a deadline of 4 weeks
- The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency would forward the material to the the County Administrative Board in Norrbotten for comments
- Sweden would provide its comments to the Finnish Ministry of the Environment stating whether it is content with the additional material or whether and to what extent it still requires additional material. If Sweden states that it is content with the provided material, the consultation process of the project would be regarded ended. If not, the Parties would need to agree separately how to proceed.

7. AOB

It was agreed that the presentations would be circulated to all the participants along with the draft minutes of the meeting.

8. Closing of the meeting

The Chair thanked the participants and ended the meeting at 11.30 am.

Participants

Sweden

Richard Kristoffersson, Swedish Environmental Protection Agency

Jens Haapalahti, County Administrative Board in Norrbotten

Sara Backéus, County Administrative Board in Norrbotten

Åsa Algotsson, County Administrative Board in Norrbotten

Matilda Björkheden, Svenska Kraftnät

Finland

Minna Torkkeli, Ministry of the Environment, chair

Piia Kähkölä, Ministry of the Environment, secretary

Leena Ruokanen, Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment in Lapland

Teija Ylimartimo, Tornionlaakson museo/Tornedalens museum

Mika Penttilä, Fingrid Oyj

Keijo Välimaa, Fingrid Oyj

Veli-Markku Uski, Sitowise Oy

Annex 1: Aurora line Status of the project, 8.6.2021 Keijo Välimaa/Fingrid, Matilda Björkheden/Svk

Annex 2: SWE/FIN kraftledning, Sitowise Oy