

Concept Paper		
Video Conference on “Roadmap for the implementation of SAARC Framework Agreement on Energy Cooperation (Electricity)”		
Video Conference	PRG 183/2020/PENT	SEC

Background:

Recognizing the importance of electricity in promoting economic growth and improving the quality of life, “SAARC Framework Agreement for Energy Cooperation (Electricity)” was signed in 2014. Adoption of this agreement is a crucial step towards a SAARC Market for Electricity on a regional basis. The key objectives of this agreement are to improve power availability in the entire region and facilitate integrated operation of the regional power grid.

The Agreement contains broad-ranging provisions:

1. Non-discriminatory access to transmission
2. Market based pricing of electricity exchanged, and
3. Establishment of body for coordination regional power integration and trade

The motive is to allow cross border trade of electricity among the South Asian countries. Progress has been made in developing bilateral electricity interconnection among some of the SAARC member states however regional interconnection is yet to be established.

Introduction:

SEC, under its thematic area of “Program on Energy Trade between SAARC countries” (PENT), is organising a video conference on “Roadmap for the implementation of SAARC Framework Agreement on Energy Cooperation (Electricity)”.

The scheduled conference will be a one-day activity and will consist of presentations / talks from experts from the SAARC region as well as outside SAARC region expert to share their experience on such regional energy frameworks. This target audience for this event will be government officials from relevant ministries, policy makers, professionals working in power sector and academia from SAARC member states.

Objectives:

The objective of the conference is to enhance to cause of SAARC Framework Agreement on Electricity Cooperation. During the event, experts will delve into various articles of the Framework Agreement, current status, barriers, future requirement to facilitate the implementation of the framework across the member states (including changes in policy regimes, establishment of national and regional power exchanges, harmonization of national regulatory frameworks and power grids / codes, roles & responsibilities of various institutions / departments, physical infrastructure, controlling authority / body), its impact on national electricity sector policies and etc. The conference will share suitability, viability and other aspects of the such framework with reference to private businesses, government officials, investors, and project developers. The motive is to collectively develop a way-forward on the SAARC Framework Agreement, which could be recommended to appropriate SAARC forums. The interaction resulting from this online event is expected to facilitate professional exchange and initiate cooperation between the stakeholders from public and private sectors.

Major Aspects /Topics to be covered during the Video Conference:

The video conference will cover the following aspects of SAARC Framework Agreement in Energy Cooperation:

1. Various articles of the Framework Agreement
2. Current status and prevailing barriers in implementation of the framework
3. Future requirement to speed up the implementation of the framework across the member states
4. Role of public and private sectors in open access of the transmission network
5. Harmonization of national regulatory frameworks and power grids
6. Establishment of national and regional power exchanges
7. Roles & responsibilities of various institutions / departments, physical infrastructure, controlling authority / body

Relevance, Coherence and Sustainability:

The video conference is relevant to the primary objectives of SEC to promote cross border electricity trade in the region. SEC, in the past have conducted number of studies / workshops / webinars related to such regional trade of electricity. Through this event, SEC shall enhance knowledge of participants on the SAARC Framework Agreement on Energy Cooperation. This will in turn give multiple benefits i.e., create awareness among the participants on the existing trade in electricity in the region. The conference will also cover the discussion on the ways to overcome energy shortages, enhance grid security and future expected challenges in power sector. It is also to discuss and on how extensively or rapidly these provisions of framework agreement can be put into practice.

Potential Professional Resource:

The experts/speakers having knowledge/experience of South Asian regional power sector shall be engaged during the event. Beside that experts will be invited to share experiences on regional electricity initiatives from outside SAARC region.

Venue and Date of the Video Conference:

The video conference will be broadcasted from the office of SAARC Energy Centre on September 22, 2020.