

Establishment of a Fishing Port at Gran Chemin, Moruga (CEC 5601/2018)

Summary of 1st Virtual Public Consultation

Project Background

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT), through the Ministry of Works and Transport (MOWT) has proposed the construction of an Offshore Fishing Port at Gran Chemin, Moruga on the south coast of Trinidad. The Environmental Management Agency (EMA) requires an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to be conducted to make an informed determination of the Certificate of Environmental Clearance (CEC) application for the project (CEC 5601/2018). Therefore, the EMA has issued a Terms of Reference (TOR) for the preparation of the EIA. NIDCO has engaged Coastal Dynamics Limited (CDL) for the EIA which is currently being conducted in accordance with the final TOR as well as international best practices and standards.



First Virtual Public Consultation Event

On Thursday 29th July 2021, NIDCO held the First Virtual Public Consultation for the “*Establishment of a Fishing Port at Gran Chemin, Moruga*”. The consultation was hosted virtually in adherence to the public health regulations for the current Covid-19 pandemic.

This First Virtual Public Consultation was aimed at increasing stakeholder awareness of the proposed project and to receive, record and consider any concerns that may be expressed. The objective was to engage with and garner feedback from all identified stakeholders with the following specific aims:

- To introduce the project’s purpose and need.
- To provide a description of the project and alternatives which were considered.
- To introduce the EIA and plans for its conduct, including any studies completed to date and other planned studies.
- To outline the role of stakeholder engagement and input into the EIA and Grievance Redress Plan and opportunities for providing feedback.

Information about the consultation event was disseminated from the 15th of July to the 29th of July 2021 through the following:

- Placement of posters at various locations in Moruga and the surrounding communities.
- Delivery of information leaflets and feedback forms to all households within Moruga and the surrounding communities.
- Advertisements online via Facebook and the posting of the TOR and information leaflet.
- Stakeholder invitation letters (electronic and hardcopy).
- Loudspeaker announcements within Moruga and surrounding communities.

Stakeholders were encouraged to register in advance for the event via the online Zoom platform and registrants were invited to provide feedback on what they were interested in having addressed during the event. A pre-recorded presentation was played along with a live question and answer session. The event was also streamed live on Facebook. This allowed the panelists the opportunity to respond to queries received via telephone and comments in Zoom, similar to what would have been achieved through an in person public consultation. The panelists comprised of:

- Mr. Devon Rampersad, Project Manager II, NIDCO
- Ms. Deja Charles, Project Manager/Coastal Engineer, CDL
- Ms. Laishalla Carr, Senior Project Manager, CDL

The live session provided opportunities for participants to voice their concerns on potential issues they may have had with the project details and EIA process.

It is noted that some feedback received prior and during the consultation, did not form part of the live question and answer due to time limitations. At the end of the event, stakeholders were still invited to submit feedback through the advertised means no later than 9th of August 2021. The deadline for feedback was also advertised on NIDCO's Facebook page.

Approximately two weeks after the consultation, drop boxes posted within the Moruga communities were collected to retrieve any submitted feedback forms. Additionally, feedback received through online feedback forms, emails, or telephone were recorded.

This document summarizes the feedback received to date for the First Virtual Public Consultation. The feedback received has been categorized for ease of reference and is being disseminated to ensure a transparent stakeholder engagement process.

PROJECT SITE

Main issues/ concerns	Response from the project team
How was the site location selected?	A study was conducted in 2006 to 2008 by Royal Haskoning which included site selection and development of the sizing of the facility. An evaluation process of various locations within Moruga was considered and the present location was selected as the preferred location for a fishing port.
Would this facility be designated a "Landed Port", to ensure that catch is able to enter established markets, local and abroad?	At this time, the port is not designed to be a landed port or a port of immigration. The intention of the port is to support the local fishing industry and the local fisherfolk. There are no plans at this stage for a Customs Office to be established to receive goods or persons from other countries. Therefore, the fish landed at the facility is anticipated to be used locally. Consultations will be held with Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries – Fisheries Division and other regulatory agencies as required during all stages of the project.

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND DEVELOPMENT

Main issues/ concerns	Response from the project team
What plans are there for 24-hour health care, fire station and an ATM?	<p>The EIA will include a conceptual Emergency Response Plan (ERP). Additionally, it is anticipated that the selected contractor will adopt mitigation measures to ensure that health care is available during the construction works. Such measures may include but not limited to provision of an ambulance service available for the site 24 hours/7 days a week.</p> <p>NIDCO intends to develop the ERP, and a Health and Safety Plan which contractors are expected to comply with to ensure measures are in place to address risks associated with fire or health during the construction phase. It should be noted that the proposed offshore facility is not expected to provide accommodation for a fire station or health care facility for the community.</p> <p>With respect to the ATM, this issue has been raised during the stakeholder/focus group meetings and discussions with the relevant parties are being held to ascertain whether it can be incorporated in the onshore fishing facility component.</p>
Any plans for refurbishing the NP gas station?	The NP gas station is out of the scope of the project and the EIA study.
Is this project attempting to create any synergies with other development needs of Moruga that support employment and economic activity, e.g., heritage assets in the area?	Yes. This project supports the Government's thrust through the Vision 2030 which has identified a number of new economies for development or new areas for economic development. One of those areas that has been identified, under Theme 4, is one of the emerging sectors that has been identified as key for development or for diversification which is the fishing and the fish processing industry. With the new fishing facility in Moruga; and the agro-processing plant that was commissioned last year, there will be enhanced synergy whereby fish landed at the new fishing port can be processed at the agro-processing plant. This is expected to contribute to economic development in the Moruga community and environs.

EIA REPORT

Main issues/ concerns	Response from the project team
Is the scientific study available for the public to access? Where was it published?	In terms of the data that is collected for the EIA, the information will be published within the EIA Report in Quarter 1, 2022.
What historical data will be used to describe the environment?	<p>The EMA in its Terms of Reference usually ask for a data period that is relevant within the last five years. All the environmental baseline data that was collected during the time of the Royal Haskoning EIA 2006/2007, will be used as historical data sets to compare to the present 2016-2021 datasets. Bounce dives was conducted to determine the presence of seabed habitats-the presence of sea grass and coral reefs. Various assessments were conducted along the coastline with respect to the vegetation, avifauna, nearshore fisheries, and these new datasets are being used to compare to the historic data sets that were collected in 2007.</p> <p>Therefore, the 2007 EIA study and its data are only being used to provide a historical context and comparison within the study area.</p>

SAFETY AND IMPACTS

Main issues/ concerns	Response from the project team
Does the EIA cover damage to land areas brought about by heavy equipment coming into the Moruga area to perform construction?	Yes, the impact assessment of the EIA will analyse all phases and activities of the proposed project.
With the supply of fuel, what are the safety systems in place? Are there any Risk Management assessments done for spills of fuel into the sea?	<p>Part of the EIA requires that for any fuel that will be stored or used for the project, oil spill modelling must be done. For this, the fuel capacity at the facility, as well as any potential vessel collisions, the fuel capacity of the vessels that will be available and other factors will be considered. All these will be inputted into the modelling study.</p> <p>All eventualities are looked at and one of them would be the possibility of a spill occurring within the Moruga Bay. The baseline data collected such as, waves, in terms of records for currents will be included in the model and what will also be included in that model would be the dispersion of an oil spill from a point source which would be identified. The different impacts would be recognized and the probability of that impact as well as the severity of it will be identified.</p> <p>Once the model is completed any mitigation measures determined will be proposed and included in the environmental impact assessment. Additionally, those results will also be presented at the second public consultation.</p>
Has an Emergency Response Plan been developed for this project? If not, how soon will it be completed?	An Emergency Response Plan has not yet been developed but it is a requirement of the EIA and would form part of the EIA submission for the project.
In case of an emergency, where is the allocated Muster Point and will there be a mutual agreement between the project team and other agencies to assist in controlling damages to environment and community?	The emergency response plan for the facility would identify the Muster Point for the facility. The project team would be required to engage all stakeholders which may be impacted, while developing a suitable response plan.
<p>Prior to the commencement of construction, the plan drawings for the various facilities shall be submitted to the Fire Prevention Department of the Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service (TTFS).</p> <p>In addition, once the Emergency Action Plan has been developed as it relates to the development and construction of the facility, it shall also be submitted for review. Inclusive of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fuel storage for vehicles and machinery to be utilized during the operation - Spillage of fuel, oil and gas and any hazardous materials - Training in Emergency Response for staff and other personnel on site - Access for Fire Service Emergency Vehicle with a turning point - Marine fire incident procedures <p>This process will allow the TTFS to properly assess the suitability and operability of the fire protection and detection systems, equipment, and procedures as it relates to fire and explosion related risks.</p>	<p>This will form part of the approval process for the proposed project.</p> <p>All drawings would be submitted to the Trinidad and Tobago Fire Services for approval prior to the start of construction.</p> <p>The final emergency plan and design details would be submitted to the Trinidad and Tobago Fire Services for approval.</p>

SAFETY AND IMPACTS

Main issues/ concerns	Response from the project team
Are there any reefs that would be impacted by the project?	The baseline assessment has revealed that there are no coral reefs within the study area. However, there are certain hard bottom areas and macro algae within the area. The modelling studies will show the potential transport of the sediment through the area and what are the residual sediment depositions to determine what are the potential impacts. When the results of the modelling studies are completed, this can be addressed at the second public consultation.
Who will be responsible for the Incident Management system for the offshore facility?	The Operation and Emergency Response Plan would outline the persons or organisations responsible for the Incident Management System for the proposed facility.
What possible impact on indigenous communities are present?	According to the UN, there is no official definition of the term 'indigenous'. However, given Moruga's history, the Merikins can be considered an indigenous group. An assessment of this group has not yet been completed but is currently being included in the socio-economic baseline of the EIA and in the assessment of impacts.
<p>Social impact analysis needs to be of high quality and align with international standards.</p> <p>What direct and indirect social impacts would this EIA cover?</p>	<p>The social impact assessment is being undertaken as part of the EIA report. The EIA conforms to guidelines and best practices recommended by the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the World Bank.</p> <p>The direct and indirect social impacts during the mobilization, construction and operational phases of the project will be assessed. This includes impacts related to traffic (land and marine), employment opportunities, impacts on the emergency services and utilities within the area. The impact assessment will be conducted during the 4th quarter of 2021 and will be the focus of the second Public Consultation.</p>
What mitigation measures will be implemented to minimize impact to the nearshore fishery? Have the fisherfolk who rely on this fishery as their main source of income, been informed of this potential negative impact?	<p>The impact assessment is still being conducted and will be completed following the results of the modelling studies mentioned during the first public consultation.</p> <p>Attention will be paid on the assessment of the impact to the nearshore fishery and the proposed mitigation measures.</p> <p>Meetings were held with the fishing representatives for the area in July 2021, where anticipated potential negative impacts to their livelihood were briefly discussed.</p> <p>Engagement with fisherfolk is currently ongoing to further inform about the proposed project, learn about their activities and discuss any potential negative impacts.</p>

LAND AND OTHER FACILITY USES

Main issues/ concerns	Response from the project team
What will be done on the lot of land next to the existing depot?	Construction works are ongoing for a new, onshore fishing facility. When this facility is completed, the existing dilapidated facility that the fisherfolk currently use will be demolished.
What are the plans for the existing fishing building? Is the Fisheries Division a part of or aware of the decision?	The existing fishing building would be demolished upon completion of the new onshore fishing facility. The Fisheries Division is aware of the plans to demolish the existing facility. These demolition works would be executed in consultation with the Fisheries Division.
After the establishment is constructed, what would become of the La Ruffin Landing Site for vessels and marketing? With respect to the facility at La Ruffin, the Fisheries Division has to be consulted.	At this time no decision has been made regarding the La Ruffin facility following the construction of the new port. The offshore fishing facility has been designed to accommodate all the fishing vessels that operate out of Gran Chemin and Moruga. It is anticipated that a lot of the fisherfolk that operate at La Ruffin would migrate to this new facility. The Fisheries Division will be consulted before any decisions are undertaken that would affect the La Ruffin facility.

EMPLOYMENT

Main issues/ concerns	Response from the project team
More information requested on employment recruiting and opportunities and that small contractors and employment opportunities by community members will be fairly done for this project.	The proposed offshore fishing facility is currently in the planning and EIA phase. When the construction phase is initiated, NIDCO's contracts usually includes clauses which ensures that there is a minimum percentage of labour hired that must come from the community (approximately 40 percent at minimum by the contractor). This clause relates to labour from within the community if the available resources are available. If any member of the community feels that they are being unfairly treated, as it relates to being employed on this project, there will be a grievance redress mechanism that they can use to have these issues examined.
Opportunity for employment for the female population of Moruga.	NIDCO endeavours to ensure that the policy used by contractors for hiring labour is non-discriminatory (e.g., gender, age etc.). In this regard, if one feels that they are being discriminated because of their gender, they can report the issue through the grievance redress mechanism.
Are there any opportunities for local contractors and how does one apply for same? What type of procurement method will be used for acquisition of contractors for the construction of the fishing port? Will it be a public private partnership?	Currently, the project is not in the phase for procurement of contractors and firms or individuals are not yet encouraged to apply. Following the completion of the EIA and receipt of the CEC, the construction phase will be initiated and the public and the Moruga community will be notified about the process to apply for any available jobs associated with the project. It is proposed that the open-tender, two envelope procurement method will be used for the procurement of Contractors for the construction of the project. A Public-Private Partnership is not anticipated at this time.
Can a list of the employment opportunities that would emerge during the management of this facility be made available so that students and residents can begin preparing themselves through suitable courses of study?	The EIA report would include preliminary information on the type of jobs that would be required to support the construction of the offshore fishing facility. Typical construction work involving, labourers, masons, carpenters, welders, etc. may be considered for this project. Additionally, the project targets fisherfolk, and services in the fishing industry such as boat repairs, net repairs, etc. There may be some persons who would be required to operate the facility, but it is not anticipated at this time that there would be many persons required for that activity. Further assessment of employment opportunities will be presented in the EIA Report and the second public consultation.

AMENITIES, MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS AT THE FACILITY

Main issues/ concerns	Response from the project team
More information requested on the nearby provision of gas.	The facility will provide services that would allow fisherfolk to refuel their marine vessels (not for cars or vehicles). Onshore, there will be an 8,000 gallon fuel storage tank, and on the offshore facility, there will be a 5,000 gallon fuel storage tank. These tanks will be connected by a 75 mm diameter gas line. There will be fuel dispensers connected to ensure that the fisherfolk can refuel their vessels on the offshore facility.
<p>Would the Coast Guard be based at the facility or is there a space for them to berth when in the Moruga area?</p> <p>What is the rationale for constructing a building for the TTCG, if they have not been consulted or confirmed the particular use of the building?</p>	<p>The facility is designed to accommodate either option. It will be at the discretion of the Coast Guard. While the area will not support a full base, there is going to be a building on that offshore facility for the Coast Guard's use and there will be berthing space for two vessels. At this time, the details of the use of the facility by the Coast Guard has not been confirmed.</p> <p>Currently, consultations are being held with the TTCG for determination of the design specifics for the facility. This includes their needs and requirements as a user, including water depths and other berthing requirements of the Coast Guard vessels.</p>
What percent of this facility would be occupied by the coastguard?	The coast guard would occupy a maximum of 20% of the facility.
Who will own the fishing facility and who would be tasked with managing the facility; the Coast Guard or the fisherfolk?	The facility will be owned by the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. It cannot be confirmed at this time which Ministry or organisation would be responsible for the management of the proposed offshore fishing facility at Moruga.
What are the proposed plans for treatment of waste and wastewater from the facility?	The facility includes a wastewater treatment plant. These will be built onshore. The wastewater and waste generated on the offshore facility would be piped to the wastewater treatment plant onshore and treated at that wastewater treatment plant.
<p>Maintenance of this facility, post commissioning would be undertaken by whom?</p> <p>Given that Moruga is a viable fishing community that will be existing well beyond the expected 25 year lifespan of the facility, who will be responsible for the rehabilitation, maintenance and repair works of the port?</p> <p>What will be the maintenance cost of the facility and surrounding areas (ongoing dredging works) and who will pay these costs?</p>	<p>The facility would be maintained by the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. The operations and maintenance plan would provide further information on the agency responsible for the maintenance of the facility.</p> <p>The logistics of the maintenance of the facility, inclusive of future maintenance dredging is still to be determined. Discussions are yet to be finalized on the institutional arrangement for the facility's management. While it is anticipated that the Fisheries Division will play a major role in the management of the facility, the budget allocations for the maintenance costs etc. are still to be finalized.</p>
<p>Will there be any foreign participation in the implementation of this project?</p> <p>Who will be constructing the facility?</p>	The construction works may be undertaken by foreign contractors or sub-contractors. The contractor would be procured by an Open-Tender procurement system. As such, the extent of foreign participation (if any) would be known upon completion of the tender process when a contractor is selected.
Will any fees be charged for the fishers to occupy the facility and if yes exactly what are the fees for each activity?	Discussions are yet to be finalized on the institutional arrangement for the facility's management. Fees may be charged for the use of the facility. A fee schedule has not been developed at this stage, but will be developed by the Fisheries Division, in consultation with the Fishing Associations in the community.
<p>Will there be any restriction on the type of the fishing methods, the fisherfolk can engage in, including recreational fishing?</p> <p>Are there be any facilities for shrimp trawlers? Will trawlers be able to berth at the port?</p>	Small trawling vessels can be berthed at the facility. However, the facility is not designed to accommodate the handling of catch from a trawler. Recreational fishing may not be allowed on the facility, as this may impede the operations of the fishing vessels within the facility.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Main issues/ concerns	Response from the project team
<p>The main stakeholders are the fisherfolk. This consultation appears to exclude them given that they have limitations with accessibility and technology.</p>	<p>Indeed, the fisherfolk are a major stakeholder. We endeavor to ensure that the EIA is all-inclusive. Prior to this virtual public consultation, meetings with the Fisheries Division were undertaken to understand the local fishing industry and to obtain contacts of the groups within the area. Meetings were conducted with the fishing representatives and a variety of forums were used in order to ensure that not only the fisherfolk, but the wider community have access to information about the event and the project.</p> <p>In addition to the virtual event, the services of TTPost were utilized within the community to ensure that all households received a packet or a leaflet with information about the project details as well as the EIA and EIA process and different avenues for feedback to be received.</p> <p>Telephone lines were open for persons wishing to express verbal feedback, and the community and fisherfolk representatives were engaged to ensure that if there were anyone who had any particular concerns or would like any feedback to reach to us, that the project team was available and accessible.</p> <p>The leaflets included written feedback forms which could be dropped off and there were drop boxes posted within the community. The feedback forms received will also be incorporated as part of the report in the EIA. Interviews with fisherfolk are ongoing to ensure they are given a voice to express any concerns or share their local knowledge about the area.</p> <p>Covid-19 has led to the creation of a different way of stakeholder engagement ; there is no intention to exclude any stakeholder.</p>
<p>Were stakeholders and the communities consulted in site selection?</p>	<p>This is the second EIA that is being done for this project, the first being one prepared by Royal Haskoning in 2006 for an alternative design and another by the Rural Development Corporation in 2016-2017. Stakeholders were consulted during each of those periods, and the location was presented.</p>
<p>With this wave of economic activity coming on stream, has any consultation of representation been made with the Security agencies with a view of providing additional security for this project?</p>	<p>The various arms of the Ministry of National Security would be engaged to ensure the site is secure during the construction and operation phases.</p>
<p>When will the next stakeholder meeting be?</p>	<p>The next public consultation is scheduled for Quarter 1, 2022. However, during the preparation of the EIA, there are several other stakeholder engagement events, which will be held. At that next public consultation meeting, the results of the EIA will be presented. Any feedback and comments that were received at the first public consultation event will be briefly discussed at the second public consultation and later incorporated into the EIA.</p>



NIDCO wishes to thank all stakeholders who participated in the First Virtual Public Consultation Event for this project. The date of the Second Public Consultation will be appropriately advertised and is scheduled for Quarter 1 of 2022.