



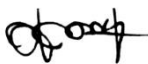
**REPORT ON THE PUBLIC HEARING HELD ON 29TH
NOVEMBER 2019 IN RESPECT OF AN APPLICATION BY
WINCH ENERGY LIMITED FOR A LICENCE EXEMPTION FOR
THE DEVELOPMENT OF A 936 kWp SOLAR PV MINI-GRID
SYSTEM IN AGORO SUB-COUNTY, LAMWO DISTRICT**



AGORO SUB-COUNTY HEADQUARTERS, LAMWO DISTRICT

Title:	Report on the Public Hearing Held in Respect of an Application by Winch Energy Limited for a Licence Exemption for the Development of a 936 kWp Solar PV Mini-Grid System in Agoro Sub-County, Lamwo District
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Document Author	Micheal Mwondha	Signature	
Reviewed by	Peter Kityo	Signature	
Reviewed by	Dr. Richard Okou	Signature	
Reviewed by	Stellah Nakibuuka	Signature	
Approved By	Eng. Ziria Tibalwa Waako Chief Executive Officer	Signature	
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In December 2018, the Rural Electrification Agency with support from GIZ published a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Electrification of 25 Villages in Lamwo District under the Promotion of Mini-Grids Project. Following the Technical and Financial Evaluation of the Bids, **Winch Energy Limited** emerged the Best-Evaluated Bidder for the development of the Mini-Grid System in Northern Uganda.

Subsequently, Winch Energy Limited applied to the Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERA) for a Licence Exemption to Develop, Finance, Build and Operate a Decentralized Mini-Grid System comprising of 25 villages in Lamwo District for 10 years. The Application received by ERA indicated that Winch Energy Limited intends to deploy Solar PV Technology with battery storage for Electrifying the Villages with a combined Capacity of 936kWp.

ERA published a Notice of the Application on 17th October 2019, to inform the public and to invite directly affected parties and Public Agencies in the areas affected by the Project to submit in writing, any objection and comments on the Project within Thirty (30) days after publication of the Notice. The Authority did not receive any objection or comment from the public.

2. PUBLIC HEARING

Under the provisions of the Electricity (Applications for Permit, License and Tariff Review) Regulations 2007, a Notice of Public Hearing was published in the New Vision of Friday, 15th November 2019, the ERA website, the District Headquarters and announcements were aired on the local Radio Stations.

Accordingly, the Public Hearing was held on 29th November 2019, at Agoro Sub-County Headquarters in Lamwo District. The Public Hearing was held in respect of the following Villages; Agoro (including Tumanum B), Apwoyo Trading Center, Loromibeng A + B, Ywaya, Oboko Trading Center, Pany Buk East and West, Moroto East and Potika, where Winch Energy Limited applied to set up a Mini-Grid System according to the Application.

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The Team from ERA that attended the Public Hearing comprised of the following persons:

No.	Name	Title
1	Peter Kityo	Manager Environmental Monitoring and Compliance-Presiding Officer
2	Michael Mwendha	Economist – Competition and Monitoring
3	Stellah Nakibuuka	Communication Officer

3. REGISTRATION

Under the provisions of the Electricity Act, Section 11 (g), the persons who attended the Public Hearing were duly registered in the Public Hearing Record of Attendance and the record indicates that 81 members of the community attended. The attendance lists were filed with the ERA Registry for safe custody.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE PUBLIC HEARING

The Public Hearing intended to:

- (i) Increase community awareness about the project and get the views of the community;
- (ii) Promote transparency and good decision making of the Authority;
- (iii) Provide an opportunity for Stakeholders and the public to participate in the Socio-Economic, Political and the Environmental Impact Assessment of the License Application;
- (iv) Provide for comments, questions and answers in respect of the Application for Licence Exemption by Winch Energy Limited before the Authority considers the Application, and;
- (v) Provide the Authority with all relevant information required in the determination of the application.

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5. COMMENCEMENT OF THE PUBLIC HEARING

The Public Hearing was presided over by the ERA Manager Environmental Monitoring and Compliance, Mr. Peter Kityo, who represented the Electricity Regulatory Authority.

Mr. Peter Kityo called the Hearing to order at 11.00 am and requested a volunteer to say an opening prayer. Mr. Jerome Ochieng said the opening prayer. The Public Hearing was notably attended by the following Local Leaders:

- (i) The LC III, Chairperson for Agoro Sub-County, Lamwo District, Denis Onyon;
- (ii) The LC I Chairperson for Agoro village, Benson Ochan;
- (iii) The Agoro Sub-County Chief Denis Kilama;
- (iv) The Agoro Parish Chief, Michael Oyela;
- (v) The Rwot, Area Chief, Oola David;
- (vi) Inspector Onyero Denis of Uganda Police;
- (vii) Representatives from REA,
- (viii) Representatives from GIZ, and;
- (ix) Representatives from Winch Energy Limited.

6. RULES OF PROCEDURE GOVERNING THE PUBLIC HEARING

The Rules of Procedure were read to the public by the Presiding Officer, Mr. Peter Kityo. He clarified that:

- (i) The Public Hearing would be Chaired and moderated by the Presiding Officer;
- (ii) The Public Hearing was exclusively about the Application for a License Exemption by Winch Energy Limited;
- (iii) Participants who wished to make brief comments or raise questions would indicate their intention to speak by show of hands and the Presiding Officer would have the discretion to choose who to speak depending on the available time;

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- (iv) ERA or Winch Energy Limited would be called upon to respond to any comments or questions directed to them;
- (v) The Public Hearing would be conducted in English although there would be interpretation for effective communication;
- (vi) Those selected to speak would mention their name and the village of residence;
- (vii) Speakers would be expected to be brief, focused and relevant to the subject matter;
- (viii) All questions would be directed to/through the Presiding Officer and the audience would be expected to observe discipline and order and remain silent and avoid interruption of the speaker.

7. REMARKS BY THE PRESIDING OFFICER

The Presiding Officer introduced the ERA Team. He also introduced representatives from Rural Electrification Agency; Evelyn Ssali and Ritah Alupo, a representative from GIZ; Olga Namatovu and the representatives of Winch Energy Limited; Alex Wanume and Susan Nabatte.

The Presiding Officer welcomed participants to the Hearing and encouraged them to communicate in a language understandable to them even if the rules dictate that Hearings are held in the English language.

He briefly mentioned to the public that ERA is a Government Agency mandated to Regulate the Generation, Transmission, and Distribution of Electrical Energy in Uganda. He mentioned that Winch Energy Limited submitted an Application to ERA for a Licence Exemption for developing a Mini-Grid System for the 25 Villages in Lamwo District.

The Presiding Officer informed the Project Affected Persons (PAPS) that ERA conducts its work fairly and transparently, hence the purpose for the Hearing. He noted that the comments and presentations from the participants would be presented to the ERA Board to decide on whether to grant or reject the Application.

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The Presiding Officer then invited a representative of Winch Energy Limited to present the Application to the PAPS.

8. PRESENTATIONS

8.1. PRESENTATION BY THE DEVELOPER-WINCH ENERGY LIMITED

The developer was represented by Mr. Alex Wanume, who presented the Application to the PAPS. Mr. Wanume thanked ERA, GIZ, REA, the District Leadership and community members gathered for attending the Hearing.

He gave a brief about Winch Energy Limited including its headquarters, its footprint on the African continent, and its specialty in Rural Electrification.

He informed the Hearing that Winch Energy Limited emerged the Best Evaluated Bidder from a competitive bidding process for the electrifying 25 Villages in Lamwo District. He informed the Hearing that Electricity Generation would be done using Remote Power Units (RPU). The RPUs are manufactured in Italy in 40-foot containers. The generating system would include battery storage that would ensure the supply of power 24/7.

Mr. Wanume further informed the Hearing that:

- I. REA would construct the Distribution Network to ensure the supply of Electricity to customer premises;
- II. The customer connections would be done free of charge;
- III. Energy consumption would be prepaid and payments would be effected through Airtel and MTN Mobile Money.
- IV. Cash payments would also be available as an alternative to mobile money.

He mentioned the benefits of the Project as; reduced cost of doing business, improved welfare for the domestic users, and overall economic growth and development in the affected areas.

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He finally informed the Hearing that Electricity would cost approximately UGX.1,800 per kWh and prayed for acceptance of the Project from the community to work together and bring development to the area.

8.2. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- (i) **Chrisostom Odokpira**; asked whether the Electricity to be supplied is capable of supporting welding.
- (ii) **Jerome Ochieng**; a veteran officer gave a vote of confidence to the project highlighting that it will be a great step for the people of Agoro to add value to their agricultural produce.
- (iii) **Charles Arel**; a resident of Central village asked about the parameters to be used in selecting businesses to be supported under the 50% electronic financing. He sought to understand a comparison between the cost of electricity to be supplied by Winch Energy Limited and the alternative diesel-powered energy. Finally, he asked about the risks associated with the Project.
- (iv) **Odongpin Komakech**; appreciated the Project, and asked whether there will be training and grading of roads where the distribution network shall traverse.
- (v) **Allen Aciro**; appreciated the Project and asked whether the Applicant shall provide electric cookstoves.
- (vi) **James Omara**; wondered if the supply to a grass thatched house will be at half price.
- (vii) **Agnes Achan and Jackline Alam**; residents of Logwar were concerned about the number of units of energy that will be consumed in a month.
- (viii) **Richard Abong**; wondered about the coverage of the electricity to be supplied by Winch Energy Limited.
- (ix) **Charles Onyango**; asked whether Winch Energy Limited will also cover the cost of internal wiring.

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(x) **David Onek**; asked about the wattage of equipment that can be used with the electricity to be supplied.

(xi) **Richard Ociti**; asked about the frequency of the price of Ush 1,800 as to whether it is a daily, weekly, or annual charge. He also inquired whether the company employees will be based in the area to ensure a quick response to incidents.

(xii) **Fidele Oryem**; informed the Hearing that there have been many promises to extend the Electricity on the National Grid to Agoro but none of the promises came to pass. He hopes this Project will come to fruition.

(xiii) **Gabriel Nyeko**; inquired whether the project will include street lighting.

(xiv) **Denis Onyero**; a Uganda Police Inspector based in Agoro asked how long the Project will be.

(xv) **Charles Ochola**; asked whether there will be any compensation for the land where the Project will be located.

(xvi) **Margaret Oloo**; wondered whether the Tariff shall be the same for grass-thatched houses as the corrugated iron sheet houses.

8.3. RESPONSES TO THE COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

The Developer made the following clarifications and responses to the comments and questions raised;

- (i) The power to be supplied will be able to run any electronic equipment in the same way customers on the grid can use.
- (ii) Procedure for selection of qualifying projects for electronic equipment co-financing will be conducted by a local partner Lutheran World Fund and extensive publications calling for applications will be made. The criteria will among others include the business projections and equipment to be considered will be any equipment as long as it is to be used in the running of the business.

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- (iii) The Project will cover a radius of 1 km from the location of the Generation Plant and connections outside this coverage will be done using DC batteries that will be charged by Winch Energy Limited.
- (iv) Before a premise is connected, there shall be an inspection of the internal wiring made by a certified wireman registered by the ERA.
- (v) Winch Energy Limited shall conduct extensive training on the safety and usage of electricity in addition to signing Customer Service Agreements with customers to be connected.
- (vi) The price proposal before ERA is a charge per unit of electricity used. However, there will be extensive training offered to understand consumption that will help customers know and keep track of their Electricity usage.
- (vii) Partnership with LWF to ensure 24-hour services and quick responses to incidents.
- (viii) There will be no separation of the Tariff charged between the grass thatched houses and corrugated iron sheet houses.
- (ix) Winch Energy Limited is available and open to discuss possible options with the Sub-County and Village leadership to have street lighting as part of the supply.
- (x) The supply of Electricity to the Villages will be perpetual.
- (xi) REA is spearheading to the identification of the land to be used by the Project and no compensation is to be provided.
- (xii) Winch Energy Limited shall conduct training on productive use of Electricity and in partnership with GIZ and Lutheran World Fund, there shall be 50% financing for Electronic equipment through the funding of business proposals, and;
- (xiii) There will be recruitment from the local communities to work as part of the Winch Energy Limited team.

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9. REMARKS BY THE LC III CHAIRPERSON, AGORO SUB-COUNTY

The LC III Chairperson, Mr. Denis Onyon in his remarks thanked ERA and the Development Partners for the Project. He informed the hearing that Agoro is a food basket around the region but currently sells products in its raw form. He noted that Electricity shall allow value addition and enhance entrepreneurship in the community and improve the incomes of the people. He indicated that as leaders, they are ready to support the Project to achieve its objectives.

10. CLOSING REMARKS BY THE PRESIDING OFFICER

The Presiding Officer asked members present for the Hearing by show of hands to indicate whether they welcome the Project and the response indicated that residents overwhelmingly supported the project. He thanked members for the contributions and orderly session. He also emphasized that at the Public Hearing, no decision was made, however, the events that transpired shall constitute a report that would be used as an input into the decision making by the Authority.

11. CONCLUSION

Overall, the Public Hearing was a success. PAPS ably aired out their views and provided an opportunity for the Applicant to attend to the outstanding issues that were raised from members from the five Villages.

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Project Affected Persons indicating their support to the Project.