CENTRAL ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION
NEW DELHI

Petition No. 259/MP/2024 along with IA No. 59/2024

Subject	:	Petition under Section 79(1)(c) of the Electricity Act, 2003 read with Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (Connectivity and General Network Access to the inter-State Transmission System) Regulations, 2022.
Petitioner	:	ACME Cleantech Solutions Private Limited (ACME)
Respondent	:	Central Transmission Utility of India Limited (CTUIL) & Ors.
Date of Hearing	:	**28.1.2025**
Coram	:	Shri Jishnu Barua, Chairperson Shri Ramesh Babu V., Member Shri Harish Dudani, Member
Parties Present	:	Shri Shryeshth Sharma, Advocate, ACME Shri Bharat Gangadharan, Advocate, ACME Shri Kartikay Trivedi, Advocate, Advocate, ACME Shri Shubham Arya, Advocate, CTUIL Ms. Poorva Saigal, Advocate, CTUIL Ms. Pallavi Saigal, Advocate, CTUIL Ms. Reeha Singh, Advocate, CTUIL

Record of Proceedings

Learned counsel for the Petitioner submitted that the Petitioner, ACME, has filed its compliance affidavit dated 21.9.2024 furnishing the additional information/clarification as sought by the Commission vide Record of Proceedings for the hearing dated 22.8.2024. Learned counsel referred to the said affidavit and mainly submitted as follows:

(a) The Petitioner has already carried out various activities in relation to the setting up of its Green Hydrogen Plant (GHP) and solar project and has spent over approximately 150 crores towards such activities.

(b) Without prejudice to its averment that LoA issued by the SECI to ACME for setting up the GHP fulfils all the requirements under Regulation 5.8(xi) (a) of the GNA Regulations, the Petitioner has already indicated its willingness to provide the bank guarantee under Regulation 5.8(xi)(c) of the GNA Regulations for the grant of connectivity, albeit for a 'reasonable amount,' i.e., up to Rs. 2 lakh/MW.

(c) Also, as per Regulation 11A of the GNA Regulations, an applicant seeking connectivity under Regulation 5.8 (xi) (c) of the GNA Regulations, i.e., the BG Route, is required to submit documents for the 50% of land required to set-up the Solar Power Plant in terms of Regulation 5.8 (xi) (c) of the GNA Regulations within 18 months from the issuance of an in-principle grant of Connectivity or within 12 months of issuance of a final grant of connectivity, whichever is earlier.

(d) Since ACME is setting up the 2182 MW solar plant, it will have to acquire the 11,000 acres of land, which means it would need to acquire the 5500 acres of land towards 50% land requirement within 12 months from the final grant of connectivity. Acquisition

of such large land parcels would require more time and it would not be practically feasible to be undertaken in terms of Regulation 11A of the GNA Regulations. ACME has, thus, prayed that the land requirements under Regulation 5.8 (xi)(c) of GNA Regulations be relaxed and it may be permitted to satisfy the land requirements in terms of Regulation 5.8 (xi)(a), i.e., as per the timelines of the LoA route. Further, ACME is ready and willing to provide a Bank Guarantee, with some lesser amount, under Regulation 5.8 (xi)(c) of the GNA Regulations for the grant of connectivity in terms of the direction passed by the Commission.

(e) Since the Petitioner is going to utilise the tracker technology in its solar panels, which enhances the production capabilities of the solar plant by ensuring greater exposure to the available solar irradiance, it requires more quantum of land to set up per MW of solar capacity, i.e., approximately 4.5 to 5.5 acres/MW against 3 to 3.5 acres/MW without a tracker. On a price performance basis, the solar tracker has an advantage compared to fixed tilt plants.

(f) As indicated, the Sanchore Sub-station will be ready for the evacuation of power only in the year 2030. Given the gestation period of GHP, the Petitioner is also expecting the readiness of its GHP in 2029-30. In any case, the Petitioner undertakes to make all reasonable endeavors to pursue its options of procuring renewable energy during the interregnum period from alternative sources of renewable energy sources to power its GHP from sources such as Power Exchanges, third-party generators, and its own merchant solar projects, etc. till such time the Sanchore substation is completed to evacuate the power.

(g) In terms of the 33rd CMETS-NR meeting, HR Saraswati Energy Private Limited has already been issued an intimation for the in-principle grant of connectivity for 300 MW at Sanchore S/s and any further allocation of capacity at Sanchore S/s to the others will severely prejudice the Petitioner. The Petitioner has, therefore, also prayed for an interim direction to CTUIL to reserve the capacity for the Petitioner at Sanchore S/s subject to the outcome of the present Petition. Also, in case of any further allocation, CTUIL may be directed that such allocation shall be subject to the outcome of the present Petition.

2. In response, the learned counsel for the Respondent, CTUIL, mainly submitted that as per the LoA dated 2.2.2024, the Scheduled Commissioning Date of its GHP is 2.2.2027 and keeping in view that Sanchore S/s is likely to be ready only in 2030, the Petitioner has itself indicated that it will be procuring the renewable energy for its GHP from the other avenues. He further submitted that as per the LoA read with subsequent amendments, the Petitioner was at liberty to establish its Solar Project anywhere in Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, or Karnataka, and the impression being given that only Sanchore S/s in Rajasthan is available for the connectivity of its solar project may not be correct. He also submitted that in the Petitioner's case, the RfS for the Selection of Green Hydrogen Producers was issued on the Mode I basis, i.e., demand of least incentive demand over the years, and SECI, in its affidavit, has also clarified that the premise of the LoA issued for setting up the GHP is different from the LoA being issued under the tenders for setting up of solar projects. He also added that even under extant GNA Regulations, the Petitioner is eligible to get the connectivity for its solar project via either the Land route or the BG route. He further submitted that insofar as the status of Sanchore S/s is concerned, 400/220kV Sanchore B Pooling station is being planned to facilitate the transfer of power (2GW) from Sanchore RE potential complex and the transmission system for evacuation of power from Sanchore PS through Sirohi (HVDC) PS is presently under planning with expected implementation timeframe as June 2030 and as on date, in-principle grant of

connectivity for the 300 MW has been issued to HR Saraswati energy at Sanchore PS on 30.8.2024 as agreed in the 33rd CMETS-NR meeting and no other application for the grant of connectivity at the said PS is pending with CTUIL.

3. Learned counsel for the Petitioner pointed out that in terms of the bid document, the Petitioner had a right to choose the location(s) of its RE Projects, and the location of Sanchore, Rajasthan, has been selected in order to ensure that its GHP is globally price competitive. He also added that even under the Mode-I of implementation modes, the selection of the developer is on the basis of the competitive bidding process. He again urged to pass an interim direction against any further allocation of capacity at Sanchore S/s.

4. In response to a specific query of the Commission regarding the production of green hydrogen beyond the solar hours, the learned counsel and the representative clarified that the GHP being set up by the Petitioner will comprise (i) Hydrogen Electrolyser and (ii) Ammonia Loop. They further submitted that since the solar power is available only for 7-8 hours on a daily basis, the Petitioner would be installing the Electrolyser of 1953 MW capacity to manufacture Green Hydrogen for the entire day to meet its daily requirements. The balance of solar power, i.e., 229 MW, would be used to run the Ammonia Loop to convert the Green Hydrogen to Green Ammonia. They further added that during the non-solar hours, the Hydrogen Electrolyser will be non-operation, whereas the Ammonia Loop will remain operational throughout the day by using the 229 MW solar power during the solar hours and by using the grid power during the non-solar hours. They also clarified that the non-biogenic greenhouse gas emissions arising from the above process will not be greater than 2 kg of CO_2 equivalent per kg of Hydrogen as prescribed by the MNRE.

5. After hearing the learned counsel for the parties, the Commission directed the Petitioner to furnish the following information/clarification, on affidavit, within three weeks:

(a) As per the Petitioner`s affidavit dated 20.8.2024, it is willing to provide the bank guarantee under Regulation 5.8(xi)(c) of the GNA Regulations and also requested that the Petitioner may be permitted to satisfy the land requirements in terms of requirements in terms of Regulation 5.8 (xi) (a) of the GNA Regulations, i.e., as per the timelines of the LOA. However, there are no such timelines to submit land documents under Regulation 5.8 (xi) (a) of the GNA Regulations. Submit the specific timelines which it intends by referring to Regulation 5.8 (xi) (a) of the GNA Regulations.

(b) As per the Petitioner`s affidavit dated 20.08.2024, it will have to acquire 11,000 acres of land for its 2182 MW Solar Plant. Submit the schedule/ timelines for the acquisition of the required land for its proposed RE Plant.

(c) Submit the details of the GNA/GNARE that has been granted / it intends to apply along with the timelines.

6. The matter remained part-heard and will be listed for the hearing on **6.3.2025.**

By order of the Commission
Sd/-
(T.D. Pant)
Joint Chief (Law)