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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF POWER

Workshop on Cybersecurity Posture Assessment for Power Utilities

The increasing digitization and adoption of Information Technology (IT) systems exposes utilities to cybersecurity risks. The last decade has seen growing incidents of cyberattacks on the power sector worldwide. One of the primary reasons is the change in the way utilities used to operate and perceive airgap between information and operational technologies (IT and OT). Traditionally, utilities have had IT and OT working in silos. Power utilities have used IT to automate business functions, while OT has been focused to control power grid operations like power transmission, critical energy infrastructure and power systems operations managed through Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems. Such a separation used to provide air gap for securing critical assets. However, today the technologies such as Internet of Things (IoT) are bridging this gap. This interaction between IT and OT continues to increase, especially with IoT-compliant SCADA systems, and decision support systems for grid operators.

Digitization of grid is inevitable and irreversible due to its advantages like increased efficiency, reliability, robustness, and better situational awareness. But at the same time, one needs to have an eye on the vulnerabilities introduced in the system by such digitization efforts. If enough care is not taken while implementing such modernization projects, it may pose a big threat to critical infrastructure like power grids. Therefore, the ability of utilities to proactively address these threats needs to be improved.

USAID in consultation with Ministry of Power (MoP) identified Assam as one of the partner states to offer technical assistance under its South Asia Regional Energy Partnership (SAREP) program. The SAREP team had multiple meetings with state stakeholders including AEGCL and the SLDC. As an outcome of these meetings, cybersecurity was selected as one of the support areas for SAREP's technical assistance.

SAREP aims to enhance awareness, build capacity, and develop the cybersecurity ecosystem. A Cybersecurity Posture Assessment Tool (CPAT) has been developed under the program to assess, create and improve the security posture of utilities/SLDCs and other critical energy infrastructure entities, specifically Discom and Transmission utilities. The tool captures the intrinsic cyber security requirements of Power utilities in Asia-specific regions where the cyber security practices still need to mature. Using this tool an "as-is" assessment to understand the status of adoption of cyber-protection practices.

The objective of proposed assessment is to create cybersecurity awareness, to understand the status of adoption of cyber-protection practices and to enhance utilities preparedness in effectively managing cyber risks.

Draft Agenda (October 12 , 13)

Venue: AEGCL Conference Room (TBD)

Date and Time	Activity/Session
October 12, 2023: Assessment Workshop	
Session -1: Inaugural	
1100 – 1110 Hrs	Welcome and Introduction Ms. Monali Zeya Hazra, Regional Energy & Clean Energy Specialist, USAID/India
1110 – 1120 Hrs	Special Address – Managing Director, AEGCL
1120 – 1130 Hrs	Context Setting – Mr. Ajay Rawat, Lead – Utility Modernization, SAREP
1130 – 1200 Hrs	Overview of Cybersecurity landscape of Utilities – Dr Faruk Kazi, Advisor, SAREP
1200 – 1210 Hrs	Tea Break
Session -2: Tool Demonstration	
1210 – 1300 Hrs	Tool Demonstration and Preparatory Discussion
1300 – 1400 Hrs	Lunch
Session -3: "As-Is" Assessment using CPAT tool	
1400 – 1515 Hrs	As-Is Assessment guided by SAREP Expert – Part 1 Participants*: Key Officials of AEGCL and SLDC
1515 – 1525 Hrs	Tea Break
1525 – 1625 Hrs	As-Is Assessment guided by SAREP Expert – Part 2 Participants*: Key Officials of AEGCL and SLDC
1625 – 1630 Hrs	Vote of Thanks – General Manager, BBM & PR, AEGCL
October 13, 2023: Field Visit	
1130 – 1300 Hrs	Visit to SLDC
1300 – 1400 Hrs	Lunch
1400 – 1530 Hrs	Visit Transmission Substation
1530 – 1700 Hrs	Data Consolidation and Preparing High Level Results Summary Report
October 30, 2023	Detailed Results Presentation and Recommendations and Roadmap

* - *Operation & Maintenance; Planning & Design; T&C and Communication; Information Technology; Human Resource; Marketing & Public Relation and from all other relevant departments.*