

ERB BOARD INSPECTS TAZAMA PIPELINE

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ERB and ZESCO Sign 2023 - 2025 KPI Framework

Bio Fuels Pricing Framework

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



Greetings and welcome to the latest edition of the ERB Newsletter, shedding light on the developments from the energy sector and exploring the tireless efforts of the Energy Regulation Board (ERB) in safeguarding the interests of consumers. This issue delves into a range of regulatory activities undertaken during the second half of 2023.

In this edition we take a closer look at the ERB Board's familiarisation tour of the entire 1,710km TAZAMA Pipeline, a vital lifeline for delivering petroleum products into Zambia. We also feature an article on ERB's hosting of the Regional Energy Regulators Association (RERA) Committee and Portfolio meetings, held in the tourist capital of Livingstone. These important meetings brought together energy regulators from across the Southern African region, promoting knowledge exchange, collaboration, and the sharing of best practices.

To strengthen compliance monitoring and enforcement, we feature the ERB's Northern Region collaboration with Zambia Metrology Agency (ZMA) to conduct joint measurement verification inspections of fuel dispensers at service stations. In addition, ERB signed a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) framework with ZESCO, a critical regulatory function that ensures transparent evaluation of ZESCO's performance, aligning it with ERB's benchmarks and objectives.

In an era where sustainable energy solutions are gaining prominence, we also discuss the significant step by ERB to develop a Biofuel pricing framework aimed at establishing a fair and transparent pricing model. Further, the ERB organised a media tour aimed to educate the public and encourage wider adoption of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and Biogas for cooking purposes.

The ERB remains committed to on-going stakeholder engagement ensuring greater transparency that builds trust and confidence to the regulatory landscape. In this edition, we present highlights on interactive engagements with consumers through various platforms including town hall meetings, Mobile Office outreach activities and exhibitions. Recognising the importance of engaging the younger generation in shaping the energy landscape, ERB Copperbelt Regional Office hosted Energy debates for universities, to encourage innovation and empower young minds to contribute to the development of sustainable energy solutions.

We also proudly highlight ERB's prestigious accolades at the Lusaka Agricultural and Commercial Show.

These are among the many articles that we have in this edition and hope that you will find them useful.

If you have any feedback for us, please do not hesitate to send us an email on erb@erb.org.zm, visit our website on www.erb.org.zm and/or follow us on our Facebook, twitter and LinkedIn platforms for more updates on developments in the energy space.

Happy Reading!

Namukolo Kasumpa
MANAGER PUBLIC RELATIONS

ERB BOARD INSPECTS TAZAMA PIPELINE

By Chibulu Musonda



ERB Board of Directors and EWURA Board during an engagement at EWURA in Tanzania

The Board of Directors of the Energy Regulation Board (ERB) conducted a familiarisation and inspection tour of the 1,710 kilometers long Tanzania Zambia Mafuta (TAZAMA) pipeline from the Indian Ocean port of Dar es Salaam (Kigamboni) in Tanzania to Ndola (Bwana Mukubwa) in Zambia.

The TAZAMA pipeline, which was commissioned in 1968 is jointly owned by the governments of the United Republic of Tanzania (33.3%) and the Republic of Zambia (66.7%), was constructed for the purpose of transporting crude oil or its petroleum products from the port of Dar es Salaam into land-locked Zambia, at an affordable, sustainable economic cost.

The INDENI Petroleum Refinery was constructed in 1973, in Ndola to refine the crude oil delivered through the TAZAMA pipeline to produce finished petroleum products. With the passage of time, the INDENI refinery was inefficient and technologically unable to meet the required national fuel stocks. Consequently, in 2022, the INDENI refinery was converted into an Oil Marketing Company (OMC) dubbed INDENI Energy Corporation, with the TAZAMA pipeline being turned into a single product transportation line bringing Low Sulphur Diesel from Tanzania to Zambia.

The entourage started with paying a courtesy call on Zambia's Deputy High Commissioner to Tanzania Mr. Anthony Bwalya at the High Commission Office in Dar es Salaam. The ERB Board then proceeded to meet their Tanzanian counterparts of the Energy and Water Utilities Regulatory Authority (EWURA) at their offices. The EWURA Board led by the Chairperson Professor Mark Mwandosya and seven fellow Board members including the EWURA Director-General Eng. Modestus Lumato welcomed them and hosted meetings that discussed TAZAMA regulation and other matters of mutual energy interests particularly on pricing of petroleum products.

The ERB Board commenced its tour at Kigamboni, Dar es Salaam with inspections of the tank farms and the Single Point Mooring (SPM) on the Indian Ocean. Fuel destined for Zambia from the Middle East is offloaded at the SPM before being loaded onto the conduit to the storage tanks at Kigamboni on its transit into the pipeline. Pumping is achieved through seven pumping stations, five of which are in Tanzania and two in Zambia. The pipeline has seven onshore product storage tanks with six at Kigamboni in Tanzania and one at Bwana Mukubwa in Ndola.

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The ERB Board visited all the seven pumping stations and product storage tanks. In Mpika, the Board witnessed the construction of the 3-kilometre connector pipeline to the Mpika Government Storage Depot. The inland connector pipeline is being constructed by local TAZAMA workers at a cost of \$1.5 million. This is a wholly Zambian government funded project that is expected to cut transportation costs of fuel into Mpika once completed in 2023. Previously, diesel would be transported via pipeline into Ndola and then moved back by road to Mpika for distribution to Mpika itself and other parts of Muchinga, Northern and Luapula provinces.

The ERB Board chairperson Eng. Bowa in his press briefing at the conclusion of the tour in Ndola, commended TAZAMA on the work being done in constructing the connector pipeline at Mpika by local TAZAMA workers, and highlighted the need for in-land connector pipelines from Ndola to other places in Zambia, as a key component to reducing transportation costs which have a huge impact on the fuel pump prices for consumers and serious damage to the road network infrastructure.

The ERB Board entourage led by chairperson Eng. Reynolds Bowa included Dr. Mususu Kaonda, Mrs Jane Musonda Mulenga, Mr. Banji Kalenga and Mr. Michael Kachumi. Also, present was the ERB Director-General, Eng. Yohane Mukabe and TAZAMA Pipelines Managing Director Mr Davison Tawethe.

ERB HOSTS REGIONAL ENERGY REGULATORS ASSOCIATION (RERA) MEETINGS

By Namukolo Kasumpa



Delegates who attended the Portfolio meetings pose for a photo

The Energy Regulation Board (ERB) hosted the Regional Energy Regulators Association (RERA) Committee and Portfolio meetings, held in the tourist capital of Livingstone in September and October 2023 at the Avani Victoria Falls Resort and Radisson Blu respectively.

RERA is a formal Association of Energy Regulators in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region which strives to advance harmonisation of the SADC energy regulatory environment for the development of a sustainable regional energy market. Membership to RERA is open to energy regulatory agencies in the Member States of the SADC Region.

The Committee and Portfolio meetings brought together delegates, from twelve different SADC countries, to discuss and collaborate on crucial issues affecting the energy landscape in the region. The events provided a platform for in-depth conversations on regional cooperation, policy coordination and implementation of sustainable energy practices. Further, the topical agendas of the meetings underscored the commitment of participating nations to address the challenges and opportunities within the evolving energy sector. *To page 5*

Key highlights of the meetings included insightful panel discussions and breakout sessions on regulatory best practices. Topics ranged from renewable energy integration and cross border energy trading to regulatory frameworks that promote investment in the sector.

In his welcoming remarks, ERB Director General Eng Yohane Mukabe said RERA was important as it brought together stakeholders and provided a forum for developing and maintaining regular contact between energy regulatory agencies; adding that the ERB was honored to host the meetings in collaboration with RERA.

The Director General further added that it had become imperative for regional energy regulators to synergise efforts and develop mechanisms to exchange information that will lead to the adoption of international best practices and the effective long-term solutions to cross boarder energy matters.

“This information sharing session could not have come at a better time as we respond to the ever-changing regulatory landscapes which reflect the overall RERA objectives”. Eng Mukabe said.

“Imperative for regional energy regulators to synergise efforts and develop mechanisms to exchange information that will lead to the adoption of international best practices and the effective long-term solutions to cross boarder energy matters, ”Director General

Benefits of RERA Membership

There are a number of benefits of belonging to RERA which include the following:

- o Access to best practices in the energy sector;
- o Access to regional harmonized electricity systems which allow for ease of power trade through imports and exports;
- o Opportunity to network and peer reviews by ‘like’ professional institution in order to enhance efficiency and effectiveness among others.

As a member of RERA, Zambia is continuously exposed to energy regulatory best practices shared among members and this enhances the ERB’s capability to proactively influence the energy sector development in the country.

As the second oldest regulator (after South Africa) Zambia regularly hosts other relatively younger regulators. These include MERA (Malawi), ECB (Namibia), EWURA (Tanzania) ERC (Uganda), and PURC (Ghana). In addition, one of ERB’s first employees when it was established heads the RERA Secretariat. Mr. Elijah Sichone, a Zambian, has been at the helm of RERA since it was established in 2002.

Mr. Mukabe noted that the forum had exceeded ERB expectations as evidenced by the excellent attendance coupled with lively and interactive participation which had enriched the quality and extent of initiatives, activities and experiences shared during discussions and greatly contributed to the success of the seminar.

RERA meetings attracted high level participation, targeting key decision makers in the regional regulatory agencies. These comprised Board members, CEOs, Directors as well as technocrats and experts in various energy fields both from the region and internationally.

The Association was officially launched in Windhoek, Namibia on 26 September 2002. RERA’s mandate was expanded from electricity to energy regulation in 2019. RERA has its own Constitution stipulating the objectives, functions and other operational requirements. Membership to RERA is open to electricity/energy regulatory agencies in the Member States of the SADC Region.

The ERB was supported in hosting this event by other organisations such as ZANACO Bank Plc, Access Bank Zambia Plc and the Ministry of Tourism.

Regulatory Agency	Country	Regulated Sector
EWURA	Tanzania	Electricity & Water
NERSA	South Africa	Electricity& Petroleum
ECB	Namibia	Electricity
ZERA	Zimbabwe	Electricity & Petroleum
LEWA	Lesotho	Electricity
ESERA	Swaziland	Electricity
MERA	Malawi	Electricity & Petroleum
ARENE	Mozambique	Electricity
IRSEA	Angola	Electricity
URA	Mauritius	Electricity & Petroleum
BERA	Botswana	Electricity & Petroleum
ERB	Zambia	Electricity & Petroleum

ERB AND ZESCO SIGN 2023 - 2025 KPI FRAMEWORK

By Precious Chikoti



ERB Board Chairperson, Eng. Reynolds Bowa (left) and Zesco Limited Board Member Mr. Charles Kaisala sign the KPI Framework

As mandated by the Energy Regulation Act No. 12 of 2019 and the Electricity Act No. 11 of 2019, the Energy Regulation Board undertakes operational performance monitoring of enterprises in the energy sector. This critical regulatory function is conducted by the use of Key Performance Indicator Frameworks (KPIs) which helps the market to function as if it were in a competitive environment.

Speaking during the signing ceremony of the KPI framework between ERB and ZESCO Limited, ERB Board Chairperson, Eng. Reynolds Bowa said the KPI Framework was essential as it allowed the ERB to track ZESCO's performance, identify problems and help in maintaining accountability amongst the stakeholders.

The Board Chairperson said the regulator had taken into consideration the need to ensure that the utility adhered to ERB's licence conditions and conformed to regulatory standards and practices for enhanced service delivery.

"Each KPI has been evaluated to ascertain its relevance in addressing ZESCO's operational problems, consumers concerns as well as meeting ERB's strategic objectives," Eng. Bowa said.

He said there was need for the Utility to enhance service delivery to the satisfaction of stakeholders while embarking on programmes that would enhance efficiency through reduction on energy losses, operational costs and maximizing the utilization of power generation plants.

The Board Chairperson said ERB would monitor and undertake performance audits to validate the data of the reports submitted by the Utility on a regular basis. This act underscores ERB's commitment to uphold the principles of good governance, accountability and public interest in regulating the energy sector.

"Consumers are therefore encouraged to provide feedback, for example, through complaints and comments, as appropriate, on the utility's performance with regards to the KPI's framework as published in the Energy Sector report," Eng. Bowa said.

The Key Performance Indicators Framework (KPIs) for the period 2023-2025 was signed on behalf of the two institutions by ERB Chairperson, Eng. Reynolds Bowa and ZESCO Limited Board Member, Mr. Charles Kaisala.

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF A MEASURE?

By Kasonde Nkole

The ERB in the current Strategic Business Plan for the period 2022 to 2026 recognises the need to “strengthen compliance monitoring and enforcement” as a key strategic objective. It is for this reason that the Energy Regulation Board’s (ERB) Northern Region Office in collaboration with Zambia Metrology Agency (ZMA) conducted joint verification inspections of fuel dispensers at selected service stations.

The ERB is responsible for overseeing the energy sector while ZMA is the national metrology organization responsible for maintaining measurement standards. Therefore, by combining their expertise, these organisations took a proactive step to ascertain the accuracy of fuel dispensers at service stations and enhance consumer confidence and promote transparency in the fuel retailing sector.

The joint inspections of dispensers were conducted in Muchinga, Northern and Luapula Provinces. The joint fuel dispensing equipment verification inspections revealed that there were service stations that had fuel dispensers that delivered more product than it should (overthrowing) and others delivered less product (underthrowing).

Out of 169 pumps tested, 113 were within tolerable limits, 50 were underthrowing while 5 were overthrowing and 1 had other challenges. A total of 38 pumps (17 petrol, and 21 LSGO) were closed and sealed off.

By conducting these joint verification inspections, ERB and ZMA have prioritised the interests of both consumers and fuel station operators. Accurate fuel dispensing ensures that customers receive the precise quantity of fuel they pay for, while operators can reliably maintain their reputation and comply with industry standards. This joint effort also serves as a deterrent to any potential malpractice, emphasising the commitment to maintaining fair business practices.

The Northern Region Office has seen a rapid growth in the number of service stations, with currently a total of 43 service stations and new sites expected to be commissioned before the close of 2023. Inspections encourage industry compliance with regulations and fuel station operators to maintain accurate dispensers.

In conclusion, the exercise proved true to the mottos of the ERB and ZMA “We safeguard your interests” and “Confidence in Measurements” respectively. Further, erring licensees faced closure and sealing off nozzles. This undertaking demonstrates the commitment of these organizations to protect consumer rights, encourage industry compliance, and foster a trustworthy business environment. The inspections were appreciated by licensees and consumers that witnessed the exercise.

BIOFUELS PRICING FRAMEWORK

By Mwanje Mambwe



Africa as a continent is endowed with vast natural resources and as such, the continent possesses considerable potential for the production and development of bioenergy.

Bioenergy is a renewable form of energy derived from biomass. For many countries, bioenergy has been identified as a reliable form of energy that could be used to replace fossil fuels and improve the livelihood of millions of the continent's populations who live without access to modern electricity.

Bioenergy is produced from feedstock such as wood fuel, charcoal, lumber pellets, crops, forestry residue, and industrial and municipal waste. Biofuels such as green diesel, biogas, biodiesel, and ethanol are known to offer cost effective and low-carbon-emitting methods for making energy more accessible to low-income households. Biofuels have been applauded as a solution to the world's dependence on hydrocarbons and are promoted as a mitigation tool for climate change. This has impelled world Governments to incorporate biofuels into their energy mandates for transportation industries. A variety of policies and measures are being identified and adopted in some parts of Africa in order to fulfill the continent's biofuel potential.

In the case of Zambia, Government has been making strides towards the inclusion of biofuels to the national energy mix since 2006. Such strides include: the review of the National Energy Policy to include biofuels, crosscutting and environmental issues, the amendment of the Energy Regulation Act through the issuance of the Statutory Instrument (SI) No. 42 in 2008 to include biofuels in the definition of fuel, the development of Biofuels standards for ethanol and biodiesel, designing blending points and promotion of investments in the production and blending of biofuels.

Further, Government through the Ministry of Energy (MOE) and the Energy Regulation Board (ERB) commenced the development of a biofuels pricing framework in 2013. However, the completion of the biofuels pricing model faced several challenges, mainly related to the lack of reliable data on local production and marketing of biofuels.

During the 2022 Budget Address, Government announced reforms on restructuring the petroleum sub-sector. The pronounced reforms included the Conversion of TAZAMA Pipelines Limited (TAZAMA) into a finished product pipeline for diesel (Low Sulphur Gasoil) only and placing INDENI Petroleum Refinery Company Limited (INDENI) on care and maintenance and later converting it into an Oil Marketing Company (OMC) and a biofuel blending plant.

In this regard, the ERB finalised the development of a pricing framework for biofuels during 2023, in order to prepare the country for the adoption of biofuels. The development of the pricing framework was conducted through wider stakeholder consultations ranging from Government, Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA), INDENI, Zambia Development Agency (ZDA), ethanol producers and Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs).

"Biofuels have been applauded as a solution to the world's dependence on hydrocarbons and are promoted as a mitigation tool for climate change. This has impelled world Governments to incorporate biofuels into their energy mandates for transportation industries."

DEMYSTIFYING USE OF GAS FOR COOKING

By Chibulu Musonda



Mrs Alidah Mbewe being interviewed by the media during the tour

The usage of electricity in the cooking of meals in most Zambia urban area homes is extremely high. With the rising cost of electricity and during times of power outages, urban households are increasingly turning to charcoal for their cooking needs.

This has adverse effects on the environment due to the deforestation impacts associated with charcoal production.

The use of alternative sources of energy like Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and Biogas for cooking can provide efficient and cost-effective energy solutions. However, while it is known that LPG and Biogas can be used to cook, questions linger on its safety and efficiency to cook. In September, the ERB undertook a Media Tour which sought to highlight the safety of cooking with LPG and Biogas.

The media tour also included the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and SNV, a Netherlands initiated development organisation. While WWF is interested in conserving nature and the environment, SNV has been at the forefront of promotion of biogas initiatives in Zambia as it is concerned with the low uptake of alternative sources of energy.

The Media tour started with a visit to one LPG retail outlet in Lusaka and later the home of Mrs. Alidah Shawa Mbewe of 11 Miles in Chibombo District. At the retail outlet, the ERB highlighted its role in the regulation of retail sells of LPG and consumer protection. The retail outlet outlined the process of retailing gas and customer support as well as established mechanisms for handling customer complaints.

Further, the retail outlet also guided on the safety awareness to customers using LPG for cooking. Customers for LPG in Zambia range from households to chain restaurants-who prepare large volume of meals for a lot of customers at once. The use of LPG in restaurants clearly shows that it is safe as there is no evidence of any explosions in restaurants in Zambia as a result of its use.

Mrs. Mbewe a household consumer has been using Biogas for cooking since 2021 and prior to 2021 she had been using LPG without experiencing any safety concerns at all. Ms. Mbewe explained that she switched from LPG to Biogas, to manage costs and with the help of SNV, she set up a Biodigester.

She stated that for the past two years there has been no difference in the cooking effectiveness by using LPG or Biogas and has totally eliminated any bills to pay for her cooking needs.

Previously, Ms. Mbewe had challenges with disposing of animal waste however, currently all the waste feeds her Biodigester daily and once she has produced the gas, what remains in the Biodigester is used as manure for other crops around the home. She grows maize, flowers, vegetables and fruits which all benefit from manure as a by-product of the Biogas producing process.

The tour highlighted that ordinary households can benefit immensely by switching from using electricity for cooking to alternative energy sources such as LPG and Biogas. For the country, this would help reduce pressure on the national grid in terms of demand for hydropower particularly in times of erratic rainfall and releasing power for use in other critical areas of the economy such as manufacturing industries, agriculture and mining.

The energy landscape is constantly evolving, ERB is in the forefront encouraging use of renewable and more sustainable energy sources and the media tour conducted aimed to raise awareness on the importance of safety and benefits of using cleaner energies.

“With the rising cost of electricity and during times of power outages, urban households are increasingly turning to charcoal for their cooking needs. This has adverse effects on the environment due to the deforestation impacts associated with charcoal production,”

ERB DATES CHIPATA AND LUSAKA STAKEHOLDERS

By Shungu Williams



Stakeholders during the town meeting held in Kabwe

Stakeholder awareness is the bedrock of a conducive energy sector as it empowers players to make informed decisions, protect consumers from exploitation, and ensures fair business practices. In that regard, informed consumers are less likely to fall victim to scams, fraud, and sub-standard products and services offered on the market.

With sensitisation, consumers are better positioned to advocate for their rights and demand reliable, quality products and services from the Licensees. Therefore, consumer awareness includes various aspects of the energy sector which among others include, understanding the role and mandate of the regulator, industry players, products and services offered, addressing grievances and complaints handling procedure, recognizing the significance of sustainable consumption and being aware of the consumer's role in ensuring efficient and effective use of energy products and services.

With the above, the ERB conducted townhall meetings in Choma, Lusaka, Kabwe and Chipata respectively. The target participants were drawn from Government Departments, Civil Society Organisations, Consumers, Local Authorities, Business Houses and Licensed entities and media houses in those locations.

The topics discussed included the overview of the ERB, complaints handling procedure, pricing of energy products such as fuel and electricity, fuel marking in Zambia and citing guidelines for filling stations. In addition, ZESCO Limited (ZESCO) was invited to make presentations on the state of electricity demand, distribution, and expansion plans in the respective districts. The nature of proceedings was interactive as participants were accorded an opportunity to engage with facilitators in relation to presentations made and other sector topical issues.

At the meetings, offices of District Commissioners (DCs) were the Guests of Honour and they expressed happiness for holding the sensitisation meetings in their districts. In Lusaka, Mr. O'Neill Chiiya, District Administrative Officer, representing the DC implored participants to take advantage of the occasion and interact with the regulator and service providers on the issues that needed to be clarified. He further requested the ERB to hold more of such engagement meetings in the district for the consumers' benefit.

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In Choma, Ms. Hope Chiposo, District Administrative Officer, represented the DC and echoed the need for more energy investments in the district to enhance provision of quality products and services for the growing population.

she further emphasised the need for information sharing to help develop partnerships which would contribute to boosting the energy sector.

On the other hand, the District Commissioner in Kabwe emphasised the need for frequent consumer engagements on various issues in the sector and information dissemination regarding implementation of Government policies on energy. The District Administrative Officer, Mr. Kapambwe Sikazwe in Chipata called on the ERB to consider opening an office in the city as the population and activities requiring the regulator's presence were steadily growing.

On the sidelines of the townhall meetings, the ERB teams also dated consumers through radio programmes which were held on radio stations such as Power FM, NKC, and Radio Maranatha in Kabwe, while similar programmes in Chipata and katete were held on Radio Maria, Breeze FM and Phangwe Radio respectively.

By conducting townhall meetings, the ERB recognizes that such engagements are a critical tool for equipping individuals with the knowledge and information on trends in the energy sector. Such engagements empower consumers to make informed choices, protect their rights and promote ethical and sustainable practices. It is for this reason that the regulator implores consumers to take advantage of such opportunities to become informed and responsible participants in the industry. For Licensees, the meetings offer an opportunity to build trust, promote transparency and better serve their customers. In the end, an aware and informed consumer-base benefits the industry at large.



The ERB team pays a courtesy call on the Chipata District Administration Office

PHOTO FOCUS



ERB Board Chairperson, Eng. Reynolds Bowa delivering his remarks during a visit to EWURA in Tanzania



ERB /EWURA Board members and Executive Management pose for a photo



ERB Board Chairperson, Eng. Reynolds Bowa hands over the Annual Report to Zambia Deputy High Commissioner to Tanzania Anthony Bwalya at the Zambian Embassy in Tanzania



Tour of the TAZAMA Pipeline



Boards and management of EWURA and ERB in a meeting

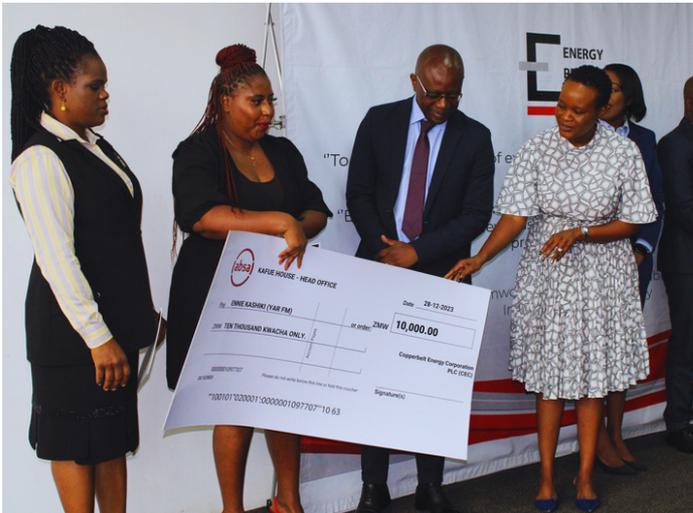
PHOTO FOCUS



Director General, Eng. Yohane Mukabe feaures on the Red Hot Breakfast Show on Hot FM



Licenseses during a breakout session at the ERB/USAID organised stakeholder engagement on online licensing



Proxy for the winner in the radio category Ennie Kashiki collects the prize on her behalf while the Director General, Eng. Yohane Mukabe (second from right), Director Finance(left) Ms Mwenya Kalaba Chama and CEC Head of corporate Communcations and Investor Relations, Ms Verona Mwila Nkolola (right) look on



Visitors at the ERB stand during the Energy,Oil and Gas Week



Stakeholders during the Mongu Town Hall Meeting

WHY PROTECT CONSUMER RIGHTS?

By Chipambeso Kasese



In the process of providing products in the marketplace, consumer expectations are not always met in terms of the perceived quality and timely provision of the said goods and services. The energy sector is no exception. Typically, service providers are at an advantage compared to consumers who are considered to be on a weaker footing. This article provides an overview of provisions available for consumer protection in the energy sector.

Energy Regulation Board (ERB) is mandated under the Energy Regulation Act No.12 of 2019 to receive, investigate, and determine complaints that emanate from the provision of energy products and services in Zambia.

Step-by-Step Consumer Complaint Lodgement

What steps do you, as a consumer, follow when faced with a grievance or complaint? To start, you need to ask whether the complaint emanates from the provision of products or services in the energy sector. It is important to note here that the provision of services in the energy sector is supervised by the ERB that also issues specialised licences to existing and would be players.

Therefore, when a complaint arises, consumers are encouraged to first engage the respective service provider in a bid to have the matter resolved. It is a licence requirement for all service providers to develop and have in place a Complaints Handling Procedure, which among other things, highlights the steps and the duration it should take a licensee to resolve different types of complaints.

In most transactions, the consumer/customer is in a weaker position and as such there is need for a regulatory body to ensure that the consumer protection agenda is upheld in the seller and buyer relationship. This need is particularly pronounced where there is a limited number of players in a market. For example, in the electricity sub-sector ZESCO Limited dominates the provision of products and services and there are no readily available substitutes for consumers to switch to.

Secondly, once the processes provided above do not yield the expected result or the outcome is inconclusive, a consumer is at liberty to report the complaint to the ERB for further redress or resolution.

As stated above, it is a requirement that consumers first report complaints to service providers because the ERB only facilitates resolution by engaging licensee's attendant to licence conditions, respectively.

In order to streamline the complaints resolution process, industry specific standards have been developed in collaboration with government agencies and other stakeholders which among other things aim to address the following: quality of products and services; safety; technical compliance; timelines for resolution of complaints; and customer service.

Step-by-Step ERB Complaint handling

Overall, industry standards implemented together with ERB Licence Conditions help in the resolution of complaints by service providers in the energy sector. When unresolved complaints are submitted to the ERB for intervention, the regulator relies on provisions contained in licence conditions and relevant industry standards to direct licensees to resolve outstanding complaints.

How does the ERB go about addressing complaints? As is the case with licensees, the ERB has in place a Complaints Handling Procedure which guides on the steps to follow when handling complaints unique to the energy sector which is made up of the electricity, petroleum, and renewable energy sub-sectors.

Once a complaint is received by the ERB, the starting point is to establish whether the service provider had been engaged and what action, if any, had been taken to resolve the complaint. After this and depending on the complexity of the complaint, investigations will be initiated, and the respective service provider notified of the matter. For example, some cases such as power outage matters can be resolved by simply engaging licensees while others such as fuel contamination complaints require procedure such as collection of fuel samples and laboratory analysis.

If after finalising investigations, the parties (licensee and complainant) find the outcome inconclusive, the ERB may convene a Complaint Meeting. This is done to accord the parties an opportunity to appear before the ERB Complaints Committee to make submissions in support of their respective positions in a complaint. Appropriate enforcement action may be instituted by the ERB if a complaint meeting establishes that a licensee breached licence conditions.

The ERB has put in place measures that enhance the consumer protection agenda in the energy sector in Zambia. The ERB ensures that all licensees have Complaints Handling Procedures that guide their complaint resolution process. In addition, specialised licence conditions also ensure that the licensed activity is guided by technical, quality, and safety requirements. Industry specific standards further help to ringfence the provision of quality products and services as they are developed and agreed to by industry players and other stakeholders active in the sector.



"The ERB has put in place measures that enhance the consumer protection agenda in the energy sector in Zambia. The ERB ensures that all licensees have Complaints Handling Procedures that guide their complaint resolution process. In addition, specialised licence conditions also ensure that the licensed activity is guided by technical, quality, and safety requirements. Industry specific standards further help to ringfence the provision of quality products and services as they are developed and agreed to by industry players and other stakeholders active in the sector.."

ERB HOSTS COPPERBELT ENERGY DEBATES FOR UNIVERSITIES

By Lenganji Sikapizye



The Copperbelt University (CBU) emerged as winners of the Copperbelt Energy Debates for Universities

As mandated in the Energy Regulation Act No. 12 of 2019, one of the functions of the Energy Regulation Board (ERB) is to disseminate information and promote the participation of the public in the provision of energy services.

The ERB, therefore, places great emphasis on stakeholder engagements in line with its 8th Strategic Business Plan (SBP) for the period 2022 to 2026. Against this background, the ERB hosted the first-ever Energy Debates for Institutions of Higher Learning including Four Universities namely; Northrise University, Copperbelt University, Copperstone University, and Catholic University at Northrise University in Ndola.

In her speech delivered during the official opening of the debates, Senior Manager-Copperbelt Region, Ms. Nasima Shaikh said the ERB recognised students in institutions of higher learning as a critical stakeholder group that can help unlock the energy potential of the country.

“Students are future researchers, engineers, economists and leaders that will drive this sector forward and the debates mirrors the views of society about the energy sector,” she said.

Ms. Shaikh said working with institutions of higher learning would help stimulate students’ interest in energy studies and research to understand the intricacies and dynamics involved in the energy supply chain. Adding that involvement of students in research topics was important because among them may come innovative ideas that will address Zambia’s energy supply puzzle and unlock the country’s energy potential.

Some of the motions debated included whether regulation of the energy sector had stimulated growth of the sector and whether green energy was the answer to Africa’s energy problems and if Zambia was ripe for electric vehicles, among others.

After two days of debating, the Copperbelt University emerged as winners while the second Prize was scooped by Northrise University and Copperstone University came out third and the Zambia Catholic University settled for fourth place.

The debates were highly successful and held on 28th and 29th September 2023. The ERB will continue to conduct more debates as it seeks to educate young people on its mandate and developments unfolding in the energy sector.

ERB SCOOPS PRIZES AT THE AGRICULTURAL AND COMMERCIAL SHOW

By Lenganji Sikapizye



Director Economic Regulation, Mr. Alfred Mwila (left), Manager Public Relations, Mrs Namukola Kasumpa (second from right) and Consumer Affairs Officer, Mr. Chibulu Musonda (far right) receive the trophy from a show representative (second left)

The Energy Regulation Board (ERB) participated at the 95th Agricultural and Commercial Show (ACSZ) held in Lusaka from 2nd to 7th August 2023 under the theme: "Inclusive Economic Transformation."

The ACSZ provides an important platform for ERB to build strong stakeholder relations as the interactive nature of the exhibition allows for stakeholders to appreciate the Boards mandate, provides greater transparency to the regulatory decisions ERB undertakes and allows the ERB to get valuable feedback from stakeholders that visit the stand.

Through its informative exhibition which encapsulated the theme, the Energy Regulation Board (ERB) achieved success by winning the prestigious 1st Prize in the Best Regulatory Organization Category and 2nd prize in the Best Public Service Industry Exhibition Category.

ERB's recognition as the top exhibitor was thanks to its exhibition focused on the "Inclusive Economic Transformation". Under the theme, ERB showcased how its regulatory activities and processes promote a sustainable and equitable energy sector.

The ERB stand contained excellent vinyl displays, projector and TV screens showing still pictures of energy infrastructure and short videos of testimonials from consumers whose complaints have been handled by the ERB, all with messaging aligned to the theme. During the exhibition, close to 400 members of the public visited the ERB stand where they were sensitised on topical issues unique to the petroleum, electricity and renewable energy sub-sectors respectively.

Show goers were also taken through the Management Information System (MIS) which enables stakeholders to apply for licences, submit complaints and file returns online. Further, some members of the public utilised the ERB's presence to submit their complaints ranging from delayed electricity connections while a number of showgoers sought to appreciate the fundamentals that influenced petroleum pricing, among other topics.

One of the stand visitors, Thokozana Mwanza provided the following feedback, "Very informative session, the personnel are very knowledgeable and professional. I learnt a lot about fuel pricing and filling station policies".

The Energy Regulation Boards accomplishments at the Agriculture and Commercial Show reflect its unwavering commitment to effective regulation and inclusive economic transformation.

Very informative session, the personnel are very knowledgeable and professional. I learnt a lot about fuel pricing and filling station policies". Comment from a visitor



The Board Chairperson Eng. Reynolds Bowa , Executive Management and members of staff during the Agricultural and commercial show



CCA team display the 2nd Prize win in the Best Public Service Industry Exhibition at the ACS



Manager Public Relations, Mrs Namukolo Kasumpa during a programme on Sun Fm at the Agricultural and Commercial Show

ERB SHOWCASES AT ENERGY, OIL AND GAS WEEK

By Lenganji Sikapizye



Students from the University of Lusaka (Unilus) visit the ERB stand during the Energy , Oil and Gas Week

The global energy landscape is rapidly evolving, with environmental concerns taking centre stage. Therefore, the role of Energy Regulation Board (ERB) is critical in formulating robust regulatory frameworks that foster innovation, attract investments, protects consumer interests and ensure long-term sustainability of the energy sector. It is against this backdrop that the ERB participates in significant events like the Energy Oil and Gas Week to showcase proactive leadership in ensuring the security and affordability of energy products while promoting an urgent adoption of clean and renewable energy sources.

The Energy, Oil and Gas Week is a recognised global event that brings together stakeholders from various segments of the energy sector. With a specific focus on oil and gas, the event serves as an ideal platform to reinforce the call for industries and the public to utilise renewable energy. This year's Energy, Oil and Gas Week was held under the theme "Stimulating Economic Growth Through a Viable and Resilient Energy Sector" from 9th - 13th October, 2023, with exhibitions held at Levy Shopping Mall in Lusaka and City Mall in Solwezi.

The week brought various players in the energy sector and accorded an opportunity to the ERB to have face to face interactions with businesses and energy consumers who were also able to lodge in their complaints as well as learn about latest developments in the energy sector. The interactive engagement with industry experts at the Energy Oil and Gas week provided valuable regulatory insights and offered an excellent opportunity to collaborate and network with key stakeholders.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Energy, Mr. Peter Mumba, officiated the week on behalf of the Energy Minister Eng. Peter Kapala at the exhibition held at Levy shopping Mall. In his speech, the Minister of Energy said in terms of the petroleum sector, Zambia had witnessed an increase in consumption of petroleum products, uptaking 3.5 million litres of diesel per day and 1.6 million litres of petrol per day.

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Eng. Kapala emphasised that the security of supply for petroleum products is key and to ensure security of supply and affordability of petroleum products, the following measures were being put in place:

- Investing in the development of fuel depots across the country, and
- Successfully converting the TAZAMA pipeline from a crude oil pipeline to finished product pipeline.

Recognising the urgent need to transition towards cleaner energy alternatives, the Minister said the Ministry of Energy was promoting increased adoption and utilization of clean and alternative sources of energy for cooking such as Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) to suppress electricity peak demand and mitigate power deficits. He said the government had placed great value on deployment of renewable energy and promotion of energy efficiency and conservation not only in the electricity sector but also the petroleum sector.

And speaking at the same occasion, European Union Charge D'affaires, Ms. Petra Gasparova said green energy development was priority for the European Union, within Europe and globally.

She said the energy sector had been a key priority for Zambia and European Union partnership for more than a decade. Since, 2014, the European Union committed more than 5 billion kwacha of grant financing in the energy sector.

"We are aiming at a transformative partnership, with major investments in transmission and distribution of energy of the power network in Zambia, which we believe will drive economic growth, development of local economies and value chains in the coming years," she said.

The continued participation of the ERB at the Energy Oil and Gas Week, serves as a testament to its commitment to a fair, transparent and sustainable energy sector.

SOUTHERN REGION COURTS STAKEHOLDERS IN THE REGION

By Brian Malambo

The Energy Regulation Board (ERB) has identified in its 2022 to 2026 Strategic Business Plan (SBP), that stakeholder engagement is crucial to fostering a more informed and participatory energy sector. To that end, the ERB Southern Region conducted a number of consumer outreach activities aimed at educating, informing and promoting transparency on energy regulatory issues, policies and processes.

The stakeholder engagement involved a variety of activities such as collaborative meetings, schools and market sensitization programs, radio programs, participation in national events and exhibitions at agriculture shows.

The different activities were held across the different districts of Mazabuka, Monze, Mongu, Choma and Livingstone. In all these consumer engagements, the ERB focused on ensuring that its core mandate is clearly explained and understood as well as bridging the information gap between the regulator and its stakeholders.

Southern Region Senior Manager Mr. Frank Mpundu explained during some of the stakeholder engagement meetings that the stakeholder engagement initiative is to create mutual understanding and share the vision of the ERB- "To be the benchmark of excellence in energy regulation in Africa by the year 2026".

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