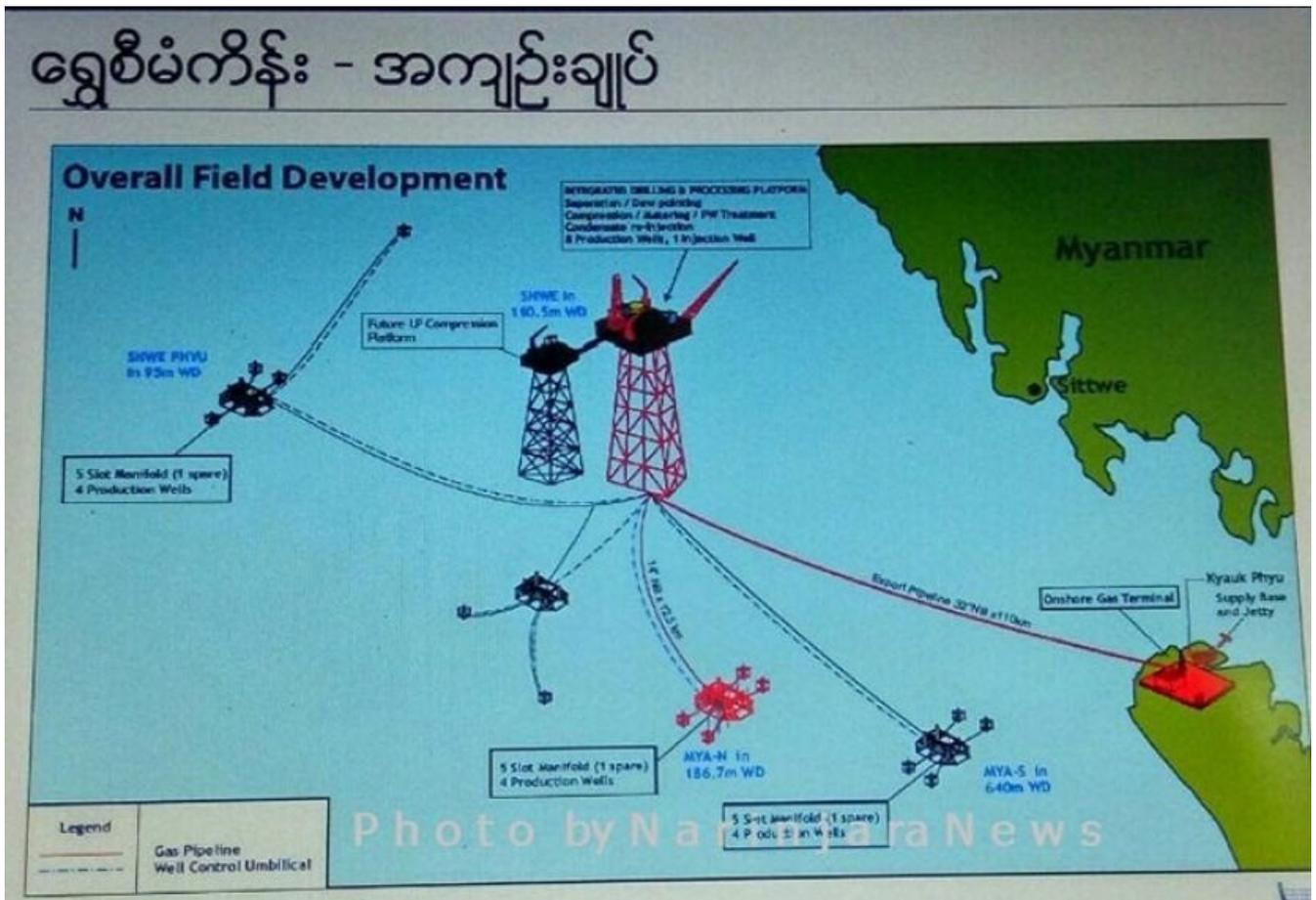


Failure to include civilian experts cause mistrust against Shwe gas project's EIA result

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The public does not trust the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) carried out by the Shwe gas project for failing to include civil society organisations (CSOs) and civilian experts, local CSOs from Kyaukphyu claimed.

The CSOs made the criticism during the meeting on future development concerning the environmental impact assessment of the Shwe project held at the meeting hall of the District General Administration Department in Kyaukphyu on 9 March.

“Only the company and government officials are involved in carrying out the EIA. CSOs and civilian experts aren’t included. So, the people don’t trust the EIA results, which have been released. So, CSOs and civilian experts need to be included in carrying out the EIA of this Shwe gas project,” said U Tun Kyi from Kyaukphyu Rural Area Development Association.

According to him, the Arakan State has suffered many damages from the Shwe gas project and the government has failed to take charge in solving the issue of farmlands that have been destroyed by the project.

In response to U Tun Kyi, U Zeyar Moe, chief officer from Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise said: “If any land has been damaged, you need to submit us a letter stating who owns it, what the extent of the damage is and what type of land it is, with photos. We will solve it.”



Photo: The meeting on future development concerning the environmental impact assessment of the Shwe gas project.

During the meeting, respective officials explained that POSCO-DAEWOO Corporation is planning to expand Shwe Phyu natural gas offshore block number (A1) and Mya natural gas offshore block number (A3).

According to 2015 Environmental Impact Assessment Procedure, all offshore oil and natural gas projects need to conduct EIA in order to receive the government's approval to carry out the projects.

POSCO-DAEWOO Corporation's project involves the construction of an offshore platform, installation of submarine equipment and pipelines and oil drilling.

"In implementing the next stage of the Shwe Natural Gas Project, ERM Myanmar Company Limited will conduct the EIA. The assessment will mainly focus on the shallow water environment where new buildings are located," Daw Myat Mon Swe from ERM Myanmar Company Limited explained at the meeting.

Water quality, sedimentation, and marine benthos will be assessed in conducting the EIA. Based on the information received from phase 1, information relating to the deepwater environment will be added for future consideration in conducting the assessment. Existing buildings will be avoided for safety reasons when conducting the assessment, Daw Myat Mon Swe added.

According to U Min Kyaw Thu from POSCO-DAEWOO Corporation, 560 million cubic feet of natural gas are currently produced daily from Shwe block and Mya block (north) of the Project Phase 1. A total of 400 million cubic feet is sold to China while 160 million cubic feet is used by the country. The company has also been fulfilling its corporate social responsibility (CSR).

"Natural gas production started in 2013. We have built schools, clinics, hospitals and roads to [fulfill our] CSR. US\$1.2 million is used annually for [the CSR activity]," said U Min Kyaw Thu.

POSCO-DAEWOO Corporation owns 51 percent of the shares in the Shwe gas project and Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise owns 15 percent of the shares while ONGC Caspian E&P B.V and GAIL India Corporation from India and Korea Gas Corporation from South Korea own 34 percent of the shares.

The natural gas pipeline passes through two states and two regions and it is 793 kilometres long from Kyaukphyu to China.

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