Effective Stakeholder participation mechanisms for environmentally sound investment and development projects and programs

Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia

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Stakeholders

Governmental institutions
Local authorities
Academics
NGO's, Donors, Private sector
Public concerned
Public

Plans, Programs
**Effective Mechanisms for the stakeholders’ participation in the decision making**

- Identification of relevant public authorities, consult with them;
- Identification of the public and public concerned;
- Notifying the public and public concerned in effectively, accurately and timely manner;
- Establish reasonable time frames for public participation;
- Take in due account of the outcome from the stakeholders’ consultation and public participation;
- Make the final decision accessible to the public along with the reasons and considerations on which it is based.

**The importance of transparency and stakeholder participation in the decision-making process**

Stakeholders with an interest of successful design, implementation and sustainability of the project/programme through:

- Sharing information and knowledge;
- Presenting their own views, interests;
- Contributing the decision-maker in verifying its findings and conclusions

Influence the final decision in order to tailor certain project/programme to local/regional/countries' interests.

Transparency and Stakeholder participation is important mechanism to avoid closed-door decision-making
Current Legislative framework in Georgia

Current legislation reveals numerous shortcomings, in particular:

- Projects subject to EIA is unclear and not in line with the EU directive;
- The developer is responsible for public participation during EIA procedure;
- Not clear regulations on the access of information and spreading of information in effective manner during the process of EIA;
- There exists no legislation in the country on SEA.

Obligations stemming from the Association Agreement and the process of Harmonization of National Legislation

Obligations of AA agreement:

- Designation of competent authority for EIA and SEA Procedures;
- Implementation of EIA and SEA legislation requirements;
- Establishment of a mechanism for providing the public with information;
- Establishment of the mechanism for public comments and opinions to be taken into account in the decision-making process;
- Guaranteeing effective, timely and not prohibitively expensive access to justice at administrative and judicial level in these procedures for the public.
Draft Law On Environmental Assessment

- Establishes procedures for environmentally sound investment projects and lists the activities which falls under EIA procedures;
- Introduces the SEA as a new instrument;
- Establishes mechanisms for effective stakeholders’ participation in EIA and SEA Process;
- Introduces transboundary procedures and involvement of relevant stakeholders;

Is in line with respective EU directives and Aarhus Convention

Main challenges for Georgia in Harmonization Process

- Need for Institutional Changes in the Ministry;
- Lack of financial Resources;
- Need for capacity-building;
- Lack of experienced professionals in the field of SEA;
- Lack of relevant database and statistical information.
Concluding Remarks

As the implementation of each and every environmentally sound investment project/programme is closely linked to the sustainable development of the country and its security, it is important to:

- Continue work on the public awareness issues;
- Support the creation/improvement of the „culture“ for Public and relevant authorities to Participate actively in the decision-making process;
- Exchange of „Best practices“ between different countries to support the transparency in the decision-making process.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!