

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION IN SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (SIA) ACTIVITIES.

***PAPER PRESENTED AT THE AFSTA TRAINING
WORKSHOP FOR TCN - PIU MEMBERS***

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21- 24 NOV. 2016

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INTRODUCTION

- ✓ Timely and broad based stakeholder involvement (public participation) is important for effective environmental assessment, remediation and management.
- ✓ Involving affected peoples and other stakeholders in the analysis of impacts and in the planning of mitigation and benefit strategies is essential. It is also highly desirable for the project to gain a social license to operate.
- ✓ Opportunity to participate is a legal entitlement, and there is a widely regarded 'right to participation' that is established in many international agreements (e.g. the 1998 Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters).
- ✓ That “people have a right to be involved in the decision making about the planned interventions that will affect their lives” is a core value of the SIA profession as outlined in the International Principles for Social Impact Assessment.

INTRODUCTION *cont'd..*

Traditional top-down approaches to decision making – often known as

- **DAD** ('decide, announce, defend') or even
- **DEAD** ('decide, educate, announce and defend') – are dead.

We now have

- **MUM** ('meet, understand, modify') or
- **POP** ('public owns project').

Public involvement, public participation, and community engagement (hereinafter collectively called **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**), much more than simple consultation, informing the public, or extracting information from them; are now the norm.

These encompass a democratic philosophy about the rights of people to be involved in decision making about matters that will likely affect their lives.

There is also an underlying philosophy about empowerment and social inclusion, particularly of vulnerable and/or minority groups.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (DEFINITION)

- Involvement of individuals and groups that are positively or negatively affected by a proposed intervention (e.g., a project, a program, a plan, a policy) subject to a decision - making process or are interested in it (André, et al 2006).

For effective public participation, it may be necessary to develop and implement an effective public participation plan to involve all interested and affected stakeholders. This involves identifying the client population that will either benefit or be adversely affected by the project. Groups affected by proposed actions include:

(a) those that live nearby;

(b) those that may be affected by the development intervention

(c) those that may be displaced because of a project; and

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION DEFN. *cont'd*

(d) those that have interest in a new project or policy change but may not live in proximity. Some others include those residents affected by the seasonal influx of people who may have to pay higher prices for food or rent, or pay higher taxes to cover the cost of expanded community services etc.

ESIA STAKEHOLDERS (DEFINITION)

- People and institutions with interest in the successful design, implementation and sustainability of a project. This includes those positively and negatively affected by the project (Howlett and Nagu, 1997).
- Persons or groups who are directly or indirectly affected by a project, and those who may have interests in a project and/or the ability to influence its outcome, either positively or negatively. They may include indigenous communities and their formal and informal representatives, national or local government authorities, politicians, religious leaders, civil society organizations and groups with special interests, the academic community, or other businesses (IFC, 2007).

OBJECTIVES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Inform and educate the stakeholders (which includes the proponent, public, decision-maker(s) and the regulator) on the planned intervention and its consequences.
- Gather data and information from the public about their human (including cultural, social, economic and political dimensions) and biophysical environment, as well as about the relations (including those related to traditional and local knowledge) they have with their environment.
- Seek input from the public on the planned intervention, including its scale, timing and ways to reduce its negative impacts, to increase its positive outcomes or to compensate impacts which may not be mitigated.
- Contribute to better analysis of proposals leading to more creative development, more sustainable interventions and consequent enhanced public acceptance and support.
- Contribute to the mutual learning of stakeholders and to improvement of the ESIA document.

Stakes Vary for Different Stakeholders

- **Some people are directly affected by the potential environmental or social impacts of a project.**
- **Others may be resident in another country altogether, but wish to communicate their concerns or suggestions to the project company.**
- **Then there are those who might have great influence over the project, such as government regulators, political or religious leaders, and others active in the local community.**
- **There are also stakeholders who, because of their knowledge or stature, can contribute positively to the project, for example, by acting as an honest broker in mediating relationships. (IFC, 2007)**

STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

- 1 Stakeholder participation involves processes whereby all those with a stake in the outcome of a project can actively participate in decisions on planning and management. They share information and knowledge, and may contribute to the project, so as to enhance the success of the project and hence ultimately their own interests’.
- 2 Stakeholder participation refers to any process that involves stakeholders in problem solving or decision-making and uses stakeholder input to make better decisions.” International Association for Public Participation (IAP2 2002).

Implications

- Stakeholder participation is a process or series of actions, impacts and outcomes not one single activity.
- The ultimate aim is better decisions (better informed, more sustainable, owned by stakeholders and implementable).
- Focuses on involving stakeholders and using their input to support government through decisions which affect everyone.

Benefits of Stakeholder Involvement in ESIA

- ❖ **Helps the ESIA address relevant issues, including those perceived as being important by other sectoral agencies, public bodies, local communities, affected groups, and others;**
- ❖ **helps to harness traditional knowledge which conventional approaches often overlooked;**
- ❖ **helps to improve information flows between proponents and different stakeholder groups, improving the understanding and 'ownership' of a project;**
- ❖ **enables project proponents to better respond to different stakeholders' needs;**
- ❖ **helps identify important environmental characteristics or mitigation opportunities that might be overlooked;**
- ❖ **helps ensure that the magnitude and significance of impacts has been properly assessed;**

Benefits of Stakeholder Involvement in ESIA

Cont'd...

- ❖ **improves the acceptability and quality of mitigation and monitoring processes;**
- ❖ **tends to improve project design, environmental soundness and social acceptability; and**
- ❖ **leads to more influential environmental assessment processes and, consequently, to development that deliver more environmental and social benefits;**
- ❖ **helps to improve the predictive quality of environmental assessments;**
- ❖ **Helps in building trust; and**
- ❖ **Improves risk management, resulting to a more stable operating environment.**

Some Potential Costs of Insufficient Public Involvement in the ESIA Process

- ❖ Conflicts between various stakeholders;**
- ❖ failure to garner local support;**
- ❖ risk of marginalising potentially valuable contributors to the decision-making process;**
- ❖ failure to tailor projects to local needs and priorities;**
- ❖ lack of accountability which can lead to ineffective or inefficient working practices and corruption;**
- ❖ failure to draw on local expertise and energy which represents a potential lost opportunity for making a good project even better;**

Some Potential Costs of Insufficient Public Involvement in the ESIA Process *cont'd...*

- ❖ **weak or failed communication which can create divisions within local communities, and can breed resentment between local communities and project proponents;**
- ❖ **the overlooking or ignoring of important, and often locally - specific, social, environmental and health impacts in project design;**
- ❖ **reliance on interventions by outside experts, limiting the learning of new possibilities by local stakeholders;**
- ❖ **Inability to prevent project benefits accruing to only a small number of influential beneficiaries.**

Foundations of effective stakeholder participation

Values-based

- ❖ Proponents utilize both accurate and relevant data as well as the values, principles or standards of stakeholders to make accurate decisions.

Decision-oriented.

- ❖ Stakeholder participation is not undertaken in a vacuum, for its own sake or as a way to “sell” a decision already made, but specifically to influence and improve decisions.

Objectives-driven.

- ❖ When stakeholder participation is planned to achieve specific and shared objectives, there is more likelihood that mechanisms or techniques will be selected and implemented in such a way as to achieve these objectives.

Attributes of a stakeholder participation process:

- ❖ **stakeholders have a say in decisions about actions that affect their lives;**
- ❖ **stakeholders' contributions genuinely influence decisions;**
- ❖ **achieving sustainable decisions by meeting the needs of all participants including the decision-makers;**
- ❖ **seeking out and facilitating the involvement of those potentially affected;**
- ❖ **involving participants in defining how they participate;**
- ❖ **providing stakeholders with the information they need so they can participate in a meaningful way;**
- ❖ **communicating to stakeholders how their input influenced the decision as a result of their participation in the process.**

Levels of Stakeholder Participation.

Five levels are involved;

- ❖ **At the Inform level:** The goal is provision of balanced and objective information to stakeholders and to keep them informed throughout the decision-making process.
- ❖ **At the Consult level:** Decision-makers seek feedback from stakeholders so the information gathered, the criteria generated and the alternatives considered can be reviewed and commented on by stakeholders during the process.
- ❖ **At the Involve level:** The goal is to engage with stakeholders to generate new ideas through dialogue. Decision-makers seek information and ideas from stakeholders while making the actual decisions themselves.
- ❖ **At the Collaborate level:** The goal is to partner with stakeholders in each aspect of the decision, including developing criteria and alternatives and identifying a preferred solution. At this level decision-makers seek to share decision-making power and responsibility with stakeholders.

Levels of Stakeholder Participation. *Contd...*

- ❖ **At the Empower level:** The goal is to place decision-making in the hands of the stakeholders. The promise is to implement what the stakeholders decide.

Principles for Successful Engagement

- ❖ **Engage with stakeholders early and often:** Proactive, transparent communication with stakeholders helps to build trust and shows that the company is committed to engagement. It is important to remain in communication with key stakeholders even when there is not a pressing need as this can pave the way for more effective problem solving when an issue does arise.
- ❖ **Make it easy for stakeholders to understand:** Ensure that the format (language, technology, medium, etc.) of engagement is understood by and accessible to stakeholders.
- ❖ **Take a long-term approach to engagement:** Cultivating a long-term relationship with stakeholders can improve operational stability and sustainability.
- ❖ **Remain thoughtful and sincere:** Listening is important. Successful engagement can enhance a company's reputation and brand, and stakeholders will be more willing to participate if they feel they are being heard.

Principles for Successful Engagement *Contd...*

- ❖ **Mutually define expectations:** Establishing goals and a feasible engagement plan increase ownership and accountability. These should still be flexible enough to accommodate different interests that arise.
- ❖ **Tailor engagement to the context:** Different stakeholders will require different levels of engagement depending on the company or project type, stage, size, and many other factors. What is important is the quality and legitimacy of stakeholder engagement.
- ❖ **Sensitivity to stakeholder dynamics:** Culture, gender, and political balance can be important to different stakeholder groups. Make an effort to understand these and ensure that the company is interacting with a person or group that is viewed as a legitimate authority by the stakeholders it is trying to engage.
- ❖ **Recognize challenges:** Engagement requires time and resources. It also raises stakeholder expectations and can lead to disappointment if their views are not adequately incorporated into decision-making.

Principles for Successful Engagement *Contd...*

- ❖ **Engaging with Indigenous Groups:** Indigenous groups are often the most vulnerable in a society. It is therefore important to engage proactively to demonstrate a sincere commitment as it can take a long time to build trust with these stakeholders. Make sure to understand the hierarchy of authorities and engage with the right people in the right order. Language and the method of engagement should be appropriate for the culture and context. There are also often regulatory implications of engaging with indigenous communities. For example, engagement could be mandated by law, there may be disclosure requirements, or engaging with these communities might need to go through an approval process.

Techniques and Tools for Effective Stakeholder Participation

There are many mechanisms for engaging stakeholders in decision-making.

Techniques need to be selected based on: Stakeholder participation objectives, stakeholder preferences, the languages and cultures of the stakeholders, resources available including money, time and skills, and the size and complexity of the project. The choice of technique or mechanism must not drive the process. Rather, techniques must be chosen having first decided the decision to be made and the participation objectives sought. Only then is a discussion of techniques appropriate.

Typical tools include:

- ❖ **Tools to share information:** • Media advertising • Newsletters • Open house displays • Websites • Briefings • Public exhibitions
- ❖ **Tools to gather and aggregate data:** • Surveys • Comment forms • Interviews • Focus groups • Public Hearings • Review panels
- ❖ **Tools to allow interaction:** • Workshops • Discussion groups • Public meetings • Ongoing stakeholder committees

BUILDING BLOCKS OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder engagement is an umbrella term encompassing a range of activities and interactions over the life of a project. These can be divided into eight components:

- ❖ Stakeholder Identification and Analysis
- ❖ Information Disclosure
- ❖ Stakeholder Consultation
- ❖ Negotiation and Partnerships
- ❖ Grievance Management
- ❖ Stakeholder Involvement in Project Monitoring
- ❖ Reporting to Stakeholders
- ❖ Management Functions

1. STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS

Stakeholder identification – determining who your project stakeholders are, and their key groupings and sub-groupings. (Remember that certain stakeholder groups might be pre-determined through regulatory requirements.). From this flows the issue of:

Stakeholder analysis - a more in-depth look at stakeholder group interests, how they will be affected and to what degree, and what influence they could have on your project. The answers to these questions will provide the basis from which to build your **stakeholder engagement strategy**.

Identify those stakeholders directly and indirectly affected by the project:

Use **impact Zoning** to enlarge the scope of stakeholders, including individuals and groups that may be directly and adversely affected, not forgetting those that will be remotely affected in the near future. Also include in your **stakeholder analysis** those groups or organizations that are not adversely affected, but whose interests determine them as stakeholders.

Use Interest-based – analysis and mapping to clarify the motivations of different actors and the ways in which they might be able to influence the project.

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1. Stakeholder Identification and Analysis *Cont'd...*

Be strategic and prioritize: Engage with different stakeholder groups at different level of intensity. Being strategic and clear as to whom you are engaging with and why, before jumping in, can help save both time and money

Refer to past stakeholder information and consultation

Develop socio-economic fact sheets with a focus on vulnerable groups

Verify stakeholder representatives

Ensure that these individuals are indeed true advocates of the views of their constituents, and can be relied upon to faithfully communicate the results of engagement with the project company back to their constituents.

Engage with stakeholders in their own communities: This ensures transparency, accountability of local leaders, engenders the belief that proponents value the community inputs and contributes to community members feeling of ownership over the consultation process.

Remember that government is a key stakeholder and involve government agencies at various levels.

1. Stakeholder Identification and Analysis *Cont'd...*

Work with representative and accountable NGOs and community-based organizations

These may aid consultation activities by:

- ❖ serving as sources of local knowledge;
- ❖ sounding boards for project design and mitigation;
- ❖ conduits for consulting with sensitive groups, and partners in planning,
- ❖ implementing and monitoring various project-related programs.

However, ensure that these are truly representative of and accountable to the community interests they claim to support and represent

2. INFORMATION DISCLOSURE

Disclosure is a formal-sounding term for making timely and accurate information accessible and understandable to interested and affected parties in all activities, from consultation and informed.

Be transparent and accountable to engender public trust and avoid misinformation

Apply good practice principles: Disclose objective and meaningful information - in a format and language that is readily understandable and tailored to the target stakeholder group and ensure accessibility

3. STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

Consultation is a two-way process of dialogue between the project company and its stakeholders. Stakeholder consultation is really about initiating and sustaining constructive external relationships over time. Companies that start the process early and take a long-term, strategic view are, in essence, developing their local “social license to operate.”

Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation

The core values of the International Association for Public Participation are as follows:

- ❖ **The public should have a say in decisions about actions that could affect their lives.**
- ❖ **Public participation includes the promise that the public’s contribution will influence the decision. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.**
- ❖ **Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.**
- ❖ **Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.**
- ❖ **Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.**
- ❖ **Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.**

Consult using basic principles of good practice

A good consultation process will be:

- ❖ targeted at those most likely to be affected by the project
- ❖ early enough to scope key issues and have an effect on the project decisions to which they relate
- ❖ informed as a result of relevant information being disseminated in advance
- ❖ meaningful to those consulted because the content is presented in a readily understandable format and the techniques used are culturally appropriate
- ❖ two-way so that both sides have the opportunity to exchange views and information, to listen, and to have their issues addressed
- ❖ gender-inclusive - through awareness that men and women often have differing views and needs
- ❖ localized to reflect appropriate time frames, context, and local languages
- ❖ free from manipulation or coercion
- ❖ documented to keep track of who has been consulted and the key issues raised
- ❖ reported back in a timely way to those consulted, with clarification of next steps
- ❖ ongoing as required during the life of the project

Consultation With Indigenous Peoples

Indigenous peoples, as social groups with identities that are distinct from dominant groups in national societies, are often among the most marginalized and vulnerable segments of a population. When consulting with indigenous peoples, try to involve the representative bodies in;

- ✓ the prior design of materials for disclosure,
- ✓ deciding how people and groups wish to be accessed,
- ✓ where the consultations will take place,
- ✓ the chronology of consultation (there may be expectations of who will be consulted in what particular order),
- ✓ the language and format to be used during the consultations.
- ✓ Also, allow sufficient time for collective decision-making processes, and review the grievance mechanism established for this phase of the project to make sure it is appropriate and accessible.

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION *cont'd...*

Give special care to cultural appropriateness by:

Translating project information into the appropriate indigenous languages; adopt non-document based means of communication, such as community briefings and radio programs; ascertain that community members understand how the project may affect them and are able to communicate their concerns, leading to their potentially benefiting from the project.

Gender Considerations In Consultation

It is important to keep in mind that projects are likely to affect men and women differently within the private and public spheres. Consulting primarily with men provides only half of the story. Partial information can lead to both risks and missed opportunities engage by women.

a. Getting the full picture

Good practice encourages seeking out the views of women, because they provide companies with a more complete picture of potential risks, impacts, and opportunities relating to their project. Women's views should also be sought out when designing employment, compensation,

Stakeholder Identification and Analysis *Cont'd...*

b. Disaggregate your data

Data collected in the course of EIAs should be disaggregated by gender, as this will enhance decision making, hence endeavour to have a representative sample by gender when undertaking surveys and interviews

c. Pay attention to team composition and emphasis:

Ensure women are on the consulting team, to relate more easily with women
Use active facilitation by spending more time in women –only groups as to ensure you have their freely expressed views

CONSTRAINTS TO STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT IN ESIA

- ❖ Time and money: Many stakeholders, whether local people, expert institutions or other government agencies, lack the time or financial resources to engage with EIA processes.
- ❖ Literacy, language and public presentation: Use of written media for non-literate indigenous stakeholders, poor access to mass media and biased nature of public fora because dominated by influential and powerful groups.
- ❖ Cultural differences: Differences in belief systems and ways of perceiving issues.
- ❖ Insensitivity to female gender issues: Non-recognition of women (especially marginalized) views and concerns in community activities.
- ❖ Physical remoteness: It is costly and time consuming for practitioners to access small, diverse and scattered groups in remote areas, and conversely, it is difficult for the inhabitants of such areas to gain access to information relevant to development plans and to ESIA.

Constraints to Stakeholder Involvement In ESIA

Cont'd...

- ❖ Political and institutional culture of decision making: Little or no culture of 'public' involvement in decision-making. In some cases, public involvement is perceived as a threat to authority and is viewed defensively by many government agencies and project proponents.
- ❖ Pressures imposed by the project cycle: Time and budget limitations, competitive tendering processes encourage proponents to adopt quick, cheap and minimal approaches to keep bids as low as possible, problem of incorporating diversity of public perception into decision making activities.
- ❖ Mistrust and elitism: Mistrust between project proponents and different stakeholder groups arising from past experience or conditioning. .Erroneous belief that stakeholder involvement cannot improve the quality of development initiatives.
- ❖ Timing: Inability to involve stakeholders during project conception and development phases prior to the commencement of the ESIA study. They therefore perform only reactive roles

Constraints to Stakeholder Involvement In Esia Cont'd...

- ❖ **Poor presentation of EIA findings:** *Presentation of result findings in technical terms* the use of sophisticated technical jargon to obscure potential or actual impacts of development projects
- ❖ **Community burn-out:** In some areas, local communities have been overburdened with officials, planners, social scientists and researchers requiring their inputs. Often, perhaps usually, such communities have seen rather little in return for their inputs, and well justified skepticism and reluctance to engage further has been the end result
- ❖ **Project size:** Achieving effective stakeholder involvement can be much more difficult for large projects
- ❖ **Lack of proactive support for stakeholder involvement in EIA:** Constructive stakeholder involvement in EIA will rarely occur spontaneously. A proactive approach ideally should include incentives for involvement and will often be required, especially where significant costs will be incurred for stakeholders to take part in dialogue processes. Incentives are now an integral component of EIA frameworks.

CONCLUSION

ESIA is a research and analytical activity with a focus on influencing decision making and the management of social issues. For effectiveness, it requires genuine stakeholder participation, in terms of meaningful and productive interaction. This will confer on interested parties a real ability to influence the management of social issues arising from human development activities.



THANK YOU