



**Magyar
Természetvédők
Szövetsége**

Föld Barátai Magyarország

**Public participation
in the strategic environmental assessment
of the national programme for EAFRD
in Hungary**

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**UNECE Aarhus Workshop on PPSD
3-4 December 2007**

Context

- Ministry for Agriculture and Rural Development was planning a plan and program for EAFRD (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development) in 2006
- They had several consultations with stakeholders, including environmental NGOs
- They realised that a Hungarian Government Decree requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) – also Directive 2001/42/EC
Also relevant: Aarhus Convention – public involvement
- They approached an environmental consultancy, which asked NSC to organise the public participation (PP) procedure for SEA

NSC: To be in or not to be in?

- NSC had big fights with Ministry of Agri in 2003-05

NO



- We realised some change in the approach of the Ministry

YES



Players

- **Planner: Ministry for Agriculture and Rural Development**
Responsibilities: preparation of Programme, incl. public debate, initiating SEA, integration of public inputs into SEA, integration of SEA's findings into the Programme; submission of Programme for Govt approval, submission of Programme and SEA summary to EC
- **SEA expert team leader: Env-in-Cent Environmental Consultancy**
Responsibilities: elaboration of SEA, integration of public inputs into SEA
- **SEA PP task implemented by:**
National Society of Conservationists: **Free of charge!**

General legal base

- Aarhus Convention, in Hungary accepted, as 2001/81. Law
- Protocoll on Strategic Environmental Assessment – Kyiv, 2003
- EC Directive on SEA (2001/42/EC)
- 1995/53 Law on environmental protection
- 2/2005 (I.11.) Government Decree on environmental assessment of certain plans and programs

Legal requirements for PP of SEA procedure in Hungary

- 2/2005 (I.11.) Government Decree describes requirements
- Main points:
 - planner has to send a plan for public participation to environmental authority when they start the planning
 - planner has to provide 30 days for commenting the environmental assessment document to the public
 - planner has to announce the commenting period in a (national) newspaper and has to have a link to SEA webpage from its webpage
 - planner has to consider the comments of the public

Principles of the public participation procedure

- The PP procedure is planned
- Access to information
- Active information for public
- Consultation to public
- Direct involvement of representatives of the public
- Considerations of the comments, opinions

Preparation

- Plan about PP procedure

The public: several levels according to expertise and affectedness, eventually the total population

- Public can comment the PP procedure plan

- PP procedure plan is submitted to authority

Tools

– Access to information

Tools: access to info, active dissemination, consultation, direct participation, integration of comments

Access to information:

- Web: www.mtvsh.hu/skv - all documents are attainable
- If asked for, it is sent by mail on paper or CD

Tools

– Active information dissemination

- Press release – when we started the SEA procedure
- Press release and advertisement in the biggest national newspaper – when the environmental report is ready
- Direct invitation of more than 100 organisations (not only NGOs) by email twice
- If asked for, regular emails when new document in the webpage

Tools – Consultation to public and Direct involvement of public

- Commenting possibility by the webpage – continuous and 30 days for the environmental report
- Open partnership conference in two cities
- National Environmental Council
- SEA Forum – authorities, scientific bodies, environmental and agriculture NGOs – 20 members
- Two meetings of SEA Forum and possibility to reach working documents

Tools

– Consideration of comments

- SEA expert team considers and includes comments of the public
- The planner (ministry) considers the comments of the public
- Feedback about results of commenting to the partners

Implementation

Start of SEA expert work	Early Oct 2006
Webpage, direct information stakeholders	In some days
SEA Forum 1 on methodology and PP plan	Mid Oct
National Environmental Council	Early Nov
Publication environmental report – ads, letters	20th Nov
SEA Forum 2 on environmental report	Early Dec
Public Consultation Forums - Budapest, Debrecen	Early Dec
Deadlines for comments	20th Dec
Meeting with State Secretary	27th Dec
Finalisation of environmental report	Mid Jan 2007
EC accepts environmental report	August

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Results

- Considerable public interest
 - More than 100 NGOs were invited to the process directly
 - SEA Forum had 24 members
 - Public interest: 23 + 29 people participated in the conferences
 - 21 organisations expressed 68 proposals and 42 comments
 - 4 authorities sent 48 comments
- SEA team took into account 95% of the comments
- Personal meeting with State Secretary, who personally decided about including SEA proposals – generally positive approach

Benefits

- Reaching all potentially interested, wide-spread, active public participation
- Participation not limited to a phase of the SEA (i.e. continuous but with peak phase)
- Discussion on water management resulted in compromise
- During the process, the Ministry showed interest and openness towards the SEA. Later: more SEAs and other environmental assessments initiated by the Ministry

Challenges and problems

- Conflict of interest - NSC
- Most recent documents of the Program were not published
- The Ministry didn't agree upon the allocation-based assessment of the Program
- Specific consultation on (irrigation) weakened the SEA
- No official feedback from Ministry how they included SEA findings and recommendations into the Program
- Therefore, no specific feedback to partners possible
- Significant changes (independent of SEA) in the Program after SEA
- An NGO attacked SEA, including NSC

Lessons learned

- Clear identification/division of responsibilities needed (visible)
- The SEA process should start parallel to programming
- Most recent drafts of both the Programme and the SEA should be public!
- Public participation should be continuous, in an iterative process, but minimum of 30 days. (More labour-intensive!)
- Separate forums on the programme itself and the SEA beneficial (clear division of purpose). Still: speakers from the floor mix topics.
- SEA experts should be able to consult those drafting the programme
- Feedback to those commenting: crucial



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Thank you for your attention!

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