

Conclusions

The Sub-regional Workshop on “Practical Application of the Convention on the Environmental Impact Assessment in Transboundary Context (the ESPOO Convention) in Central Asia

Cholpon-Ata city-Issyk – Kul Oblast, Kyrgyzstan
5 - 7 October 2004.

The Ministry of Ecology and Emergencies of Kyrgyz Republic has organized the workshop in cooperation with CAREC, UNECE, and with the support of the OSCE Center in Bishkek and the Swiss Government.

The provisions of the Espoo convention have been presented by the representative of Secretariat of the Convention at UNECE, and draft guidelines on the application of the convention have been introduced by representative of CAREC. Delegates from CA countries made presentations on existing legislation on EIA and its practical implementation in their respective countries. The representative of the Swiss Government shared experience of Switzerland in implementing the convention.

After hearing all presentations and having the discussions, We, participants of the workshop, representatives of Ministry of Ecology, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Parliamentarians, NGOs and private sectors from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and representatives of international organizations and donors:

- Being convinced of the fact that sub-regional cooperation promotes the intention of the Parties to secure environmentally justified and sustainable development of the CA countries, in the implementation of the Central Asian initiative on sustainable development and EUCCA Environmental Strategy, adopted at the fifth European conference of ministers of environment of the UNECE (Kiev, May 2003).
- Underlining the necessity to take into account ecological factors at the early stages of decision-making process;
- Acknowledging the obligation to apply environmental impact assessment as necessary instrument for minimization of significant negative environmental impact in a transboundary context as included in the Convention,

do hereby propose:

- 1.) For the Governments of all CA Countries:
 - to further strengthen the existing national legislation on EIA to ensure it is in compliance with the Espoo convention,
 - to encourage those CA States, which have not yet done so, to become a party to the Convention,

- to facilitate the process of public involvement in the process of practical application of the Espoo convention on the national level by means of organization of national seminars, meetings and trainings;
- to promote broad national circulation of the guidelines in particular to regional and local authorities, environmental organizations and users of natural resources, NGOs and the public,
- to apply the guidelines to proposed activities with transboundary impacts in accordance with the Convention:
 - i. in the framework of a pilot project,
 - ii. to use the experiences gained during the implementation of the pilot project,
 - iii. to develop bilateral and/or multilateral agreements in order to further implement the provisions of the Convention,
- to request the delegation of the Kyrgyz Republic to inform the other Parties of the convention about the results of the seminar at the forthcoming Working Group on EIA in April 2005,
- to inform about the results of the seminar at the forthcoming meeting of ministers of environment of the EUCCA countries “Kiev + 1” in the city of Tbilisi, October 2004

2.) For the Expert Working Group:

- to prepare final draft of the guidelines by December 2004, taking into account the recommendations of the workshop participants and all stakeholders.
- to organize national workshops to discuss the final draft of the guidelines,
- to finalize the guidelines by March 2005 based on the recommendations and feedbacks received from the national workshops on the final draft guideline,
- to identify needs for capacity building in EIA in a transboundary context in the CA region,

3.) For the International Organizations and Donors

- to provide technical and financial support for the implementation of pilot projects on practical implementation of the Convention upon requests of the CA countries,
- to render assistance in reproduction and wide dissemination of the guidelines both at local and national levels,
- to support capacity building activities of the CA countries on practical application of the Convention,

The participants of the workshop express their sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Ecology and Emergencies of the Kyrgyz Republic, UNECE, CAREC, Government of Switzerland, and the OSCE Center in Bishkek.