

Adjara Solid Waste Management project, Georgia

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CEE Bankwatch Network's mission is to prevent the environmentally and socially harmful impacts of international development finance, and to promote alternative solutions and public participation

Summary

While the planning process of the solid waste management project for the Autonomous Republic of Adjara is well advanced (first draft of EIA report in December 2008, public consultation meeting in February 2009), the Association Green Alternative has found several problematic concerns. Among them are the lack of information for affected communities, the absence of vital aspects in the EIA process and the disregard of potential negative social impacts of the project. These concerns should be taken into account before financing by the EBRD is granted.

Background

On 19 December 2008, the Department of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Adjara Autonomous Republic (Georgia) published the first draft of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report of the Adjara Solid Waste Management Project. The total project cost is EUR 7 million (EUR 3m loan and EUR 4m grant) which will be financed partly by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and partly by SIDA (Swedish International Development Agency).

The main aim of the project is solid waste management in the Autonomous Republic of Adjara. According to the draft EIA report there should be two phases in the project's implementation. During the first phase the main focus will be on the coastal zone of Adjara including Batumi, Kobuleti and Chakvi, and during the second phase solid waste management should be conducted in the whole of Adjara.

Association Green Alternative has reviewed the project documentation and in February 2009 attended the public consultation meetings regarding the project, finding some problematic issues that need to be taken into consideration during the finalisation of the EIA report.

Access to information and public participation

On visiting the villages (Chaisubani, Micro-Rayon 7) close to the proposed landfill site – less than 1 kilometre away – in Chakvi, it was established that the villagers did not know anything about the planned public consultations regarding the project, nor did they have any information about the project itself.

Concerns regarding the selection of the landfill site

During the public consultations the project consultants declared that the site selection process had not been not conducted as part of the EIA process. Instead a site was selected based on the feasibility study prepared under TACIS/BSIF¹. It is also worth mentioning that, according to the project consultants, after the closure of the proposed landfill in Chakvi there is not left any suitable site for landfill in Adjara.

¹ A comprehensive site selection study has been carried out as a part of the feasibility study (Tacis, BSIF) in September 20, 2006

Concerns regarding the flaring of greenhouse gases

According to the project documentation the landfill gases will be collected and flared in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions². The project consultants have stated that using greenhouse gases for electricity production from the Chakvi landfill is not economically viable and is therefore not included in the draft EIA report. Without making a detailed analysis it is unclear whether flaring is the best solution for the landfill gas and this should be examined further.

Concerns related to the non-existence of control mechanisms in the project

According to the project consultants, the government of Adjara is taking responsibility for the implementation of the project. However the project consultants do not have a clear view about the control mechanisms that ought to ensure the implementation of the project in compliance with EU directives, which has increased doubts among local people.

Social concerns

According to the draft EIA report the social impact of the project is limited only to those households living within the proposed landfill site, rather than examining its economic and social impact not only on households living next to the proposed landfill site (less than 1 km away) but also on the whole of Chakvi. It should be noted that tourism is one of the sources of income in the villages next to the landfill site and this should be taken into account by the project consultants, as the project may lead to a loss of income for the villagers.

In addition to this, in the draft EIA there is no mention of how to analyse the impact of the project on waste collection service tariffs, including mitigation measures for socially vulnerable groups.

Recommendations

We recommend that, with the support of the EBRD, the local authorities:

- Prepare a general waste management plan for Adjara where the main focus will be not only on landfilling but also other environmentally sustainable waste management options, for example, establishing a Mechanical Biological Treatment plant at the landfill site
- Conduct additional research in order to find alternative sites for the landfill
- Conduct a detailed social analysis of the project and prepare mitigation measures for the villagers living next to the proposed landfill site
- Analyse the impact of the project on waste collection service tariffs, including mitigation measures for socially vulnerable groups.

For more information

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² Paragraph 8.3.1. of the EIA of the project