

Social Impact assessment for construction of a Energy complex in Seman, Prefecture of Fier

Situation analysis

This Social Impact Assessment of the Adriatik LNG Terminal and Power Plant Project in Fier is a product of COMPORT shpk. The work involves numerous representative individuals in Fier, provincial and district statistics bureaus, the State Statistics institute INSTAT, and a team of national experts. The investment encompasses the communications means and the interests of approx. 380,000 habitants living in that area (included in the District of Fier). The profiting areas involved in the investment are in the district of Fier (the city of Fier, the Comunes of Dermenas and Seman) The SIA survey is unconventional in two ways. First, it focuses much more than most SIAs on understanding and analyzing what people in communities neighbouring the Plant expect from this investment' project. COMPORT's approach was to fully understand what these communities aspire and strive for. COMPORT shpk aimed to build by this SIA an interactive environment, where development perspectives are generated for the entire region in accordance with the local vision and resources. On this ground this SIA tends to meet not only the present needs, but it addresses also the future prospective of the region.

Our project objectives were as follows:

- To expand the scope beyond the conventional approach of Social Impact Assessments, aiming to identify the best efficient ways of development for the entire region according to the existing own resources. This project- as an energy sector investment- fully guarantees a fast economic growth objective.
- To measure perceptions, vision and expectancies of the public involved in order to address concerns and eventual negative impacts in a consensual way, making of everyone a decision maker. This participatory approach has proved to be crucial for building comprehension, consensus and ownership.
- Moreover with this information and statistical analyses COMPORT Shpk strives to enhance a scientific multi-disciplinary process of mitigation based on mutual interest for development and respect. Providing a fair evaluation of the potential impacts of the kind, in order to facilitate the adequate response, including diversion or mitigation of possibly adverse effects of the project, project acceptance by the public and at processing for permits and official approvals.

Strategy and implementation

The SIA was considered an integral part of the planning process for the project. COMPORT shpk strived to promote and enhance a sound and effective project development, keeping negative consequences within affordable and balanced limits. Our approach provided opportunities for communities to gain advance understanding of the potential impacts of the development and fully express their concerns and interests in advance, in order to build consensus, cooperation and ownership about the project. The SIA focused keenly on the way a decision-making process was to be completed, encouraging participation and involvement, respect for every community member, the right to information and freedom of expression.

The needed information was gathered in different ways, intertwining sociological research techniques, in a way to allow back-checking of data. The methodological approach objectives were as follows:

Public Involvement and Public Participation: On the purpose of dredging the opinion of the habitants in the villages of Fier regarding the construction the Adriatic LNG Terminal and Power Plant, several sociological research methods such as interviews, casual conversations with individuals or small groups were applied. The questionnaire contains 16 questions: 3 open end questions and 13 structured questions; all together offered about 70 alternative answers. Since the EGUG Project had already surveyed 2,000 families in the city of Fier, COMPORT decided to focus its survey in the rural areas neighboring the investment footprint. For the city of Fier a qualitative opinion research was made, in order to guarantee that the main findings of the quantitative survey regarding the investment did meet also city's population expectancies.

Results

The main finding of the report was that there was a solid readiness and great eagerness by the public in the local area to have the Energy Complex of Seman built and operational.

The few found concerns were mostly related to former bitter experiences with energy industrial investments.