Topic 3

Public involvement

Purpose and objectives of public involvement

- informing stakeholders

- gaining their views, concerns and values

- taking account of public inputs in decision making

- influencing project design

- obtaining local knowledge

- increasing public confidence

- improving transparency and accountability in decision-making

- reducing conflict

Levels of public involvement

- **information**

  – one way flow from proponent to public

- **consultation**

  – two way exchange of information

- **participation**

  – interaction with the public

- **negotiation**

  – face to face discussion

Key stakeholders

- local people affected by a proposal

- proponent and project beneficiaries

- government agencies

- NGOs

- others, e.g. donors, the private sector, academics

Principles of public involvement

The process should be:

- inclusive – covers all stakeholders

- open and transparent – steps and activities are understood

- relevant – focused on the issues that matter

- fair – conducted impartially and without bias toward any stakeholder

- responsive – to stakeholder requirements and inputs

- credible – builds confidence and trust

Public involvement in key stages of the EIA process

- **screening**
  - determining the need for, and level, of EIA
- **scoping**
  - identifying the key issues and alternatives
- **impact analysis**
  - identifying the significant impacts and mitigating measures
- **review**
  - commenting on/responding to the EIA report
- **implementation and monitoring**
  - checking EIA follow up

Developing a public involvement program typically involves:

- determining its scope

- identifying interested and affected public

- selecting appropriate techniques

- considering the relationship to decision-making

- providing feedback to stakeholders

- undertaking the analysis of stakeholder inputs

- keeping to budget and time lines

- confidentiality

Factors affecting the effectiveness of public involvement

- poverty

- remote and rural settings

- illiteracy

- culture/local values

- language

- legal systems override traditional systems

- dominance of interest groups

- proponent confidentiality

Principles for successful application of public involvement techniques

- provide the right information

- allow sufficient time to review and respond

- provide appropriate opportunities/means for stakeholder involvement

- respond issues and concerns raised

- feed back the results of public input

- choose venues and times of events to suit stakeholders

Principles for minimising conflict

- involve all stakeholders

- establish communication channels

- describe the proposal and its objectives

- listen to the concerns and interests of affected people

- treat people fairly and impartially

- be empathetic and flexible

- mitigate impacts and compensate for loss and damage

- acknowledge concerns and provide feed-back

Common reasons given
for avoiding public involvement

- it's too early

- it will take too long and will cost too much

- it will stir up opposition

- we will only hear from the articulate

- we'll raise expectations

- people won't understand