Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Forum

Key Social Development Issues in Hydropower Projects

Maninder Gill, World Bank

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Socially sustainable Hydropower Development

Well-designed and implemented hydropower plants can contribute to social sustainability

- Hydropower represents clean energy;
- Hydropower development can help avoid adverse social impacts associated with other forms of energy;
- Hydropower development can be socially sustainable if it encompasses appropriate spatial and temporal elements:
  - Needs to address the local region, including the upstream watershed, the reservoir, downstream river as well as irrigated areas (in case of multi-purpose dams);
  - Social mitigation efforts need to start a few years before beginning of construction and continue beyond dam completion.

Socially sustainable Hydropower Development

Key Principles for promoting socially sustainable hydropower development

- Factor social impacts into the decision on whether and where to build a hydropower project and its design features
- Plan and implement hydropower development as an entry point for local economic development
- Consult with and involve affected people and other primary stakeholders in the planning process from the earliest stages
- Identify all adverse social impacts exhaustively as part of a baseline census and socioeconomic surveys

Socially sustainable Hydropower Development

Key Principles for promoting socially sustainable hydropower development…(continued)

- Undertake comprehensive planning, coordinated with plans for local economic development – with special focus on vulnerable groups
- Establish effective institutional structures for the design, planning, implementation and monitoring of social aspects – including oversight and coordination mechanisms.
- Fully resource the mitigation and development plans, and carry out systematic monitoring and evaluation throughout implementation
- Start early implementation of mitigation and development activities associated with livelihood restoration activities

Socially sustainable Hydropower Development

Hydropower can be an effective entry point for local economic development

- Bring stakeholders (regional and local governments, civil society, developers, affected communities) together to gather their expectations from the project
- Review regional development plan (s) in the project area and identify key drivers of local economic growth
- Identify avenues to use hydropower development as a catalyst for local development

Socially sustainable Hydropower Development

Hydropower can be an effective entry point for local economic development……(continued)

- Assess how the hydropower project can reinforce and support key drivers of local growth:
  - Transport and communication; Water (irrigation or industrial use); Fisheries; Power supply; Forestry; Infrastructure; Tourism; Institutions; Social capital
- Assist the affected people and other stakeholders with training, organizational support, capital and advisory services to undertake activities that promote local economic development
- Coordinate social mitigation / development plans under the project with existing or updated local municipal / regional development plans

Socially sustainable Hydropower Development

Meaningful consultations help promote community acceptance

- Consultations involve multiple stakeholders and multiple stages
- Prepare a consultation strategy which explains different levels and for a of consultation, their sequence, and the process by which they will be taken into account
- Discuss the consultations strategy at a stakeholders forum for endorsement by key stakeholders
- Conduct timely and meaningful consultations that can influence project design and mitigation / development plans
- Demonstrate that key comments and suggestions received during consultations have been considered and thought through, but don't give any stakeholder the right to veto the project
- Consult on scope of the project, ToR for surveys, draft plans and implementation progress
- Undertake a combination of consultations with representatives with larger meetings involving larger stakeholder groups

Socially sustainable Hydropower Development

Establish a comprehensive baseline

- Identify a typology of project impacts;
- Discuss typology during consultations with stakeholders
- Contract baseline development to qualified agencies
- Conduct both census of affected people and properties as well as a socioeconomic survey to document the socio-economic and cultural aspects of the affected people and other involved communities;
- Take into account informal, temporary or legally unrecognized land and resource use;

Socially sustainable Hydropower Development

Establish a comprehensive baseline

Ground-truth" official data

Disclose baseline information to stakeholder and obtain their feedback and comments

Establish a process of appeals and redress regarding the baseline

Update baseline every two years

Take into account the implications of baseline updates on entitlements

Socially sustainable Hydropower Development

Focus on vulnerable social groups

- Identify vulnerable groups and their specific socioeconomic and cultural characteristics as part of census and socioeconomic baseline surveys
- Such groups could consist of indigenous peoples, forest dependent communities, affected people without legal land tenure, landless labor, women-headed households etc.
- Consultations need to focus on their special socioeconomic characteristics and needs – may need to conduct special focus group discussions for them
- Take into account special national legal provisions or international treaties to protect their rights and provide special assistance
- Specifically address the needs of such groups in mitigation / development plans
- Include a special focus on vulnerable groups in monitoring and evaluation

Socially sustainable Hydropower Development

Implementation and monitoring

- Implementation of social mitigation / development plans usually is a multi-year process involving a wide-range of activities in a large geographical area
- Establish mechanisms for coordinated implementation and continuous monitoring
- Assign clear institutional and funding responsibility for all mitigation / development activities

- Several important principles of implementation:
  - Link implementation of social mitigation plans to hydropower construction
  - Agree on “green light” conditions for construction
  - Phase project construction in a way that the resettlement associated with a given level of the reservoir (compensation, other assistance, initiation of income restoration measures, preparation of resettlement sites) is completed at least one year before possible submergence up to that level;
  - Initiate livelihood development activities a few years before physical displacement
  - Implement resettlement by community and not by reservoir level
  - Establish effective and prompt grievance redress mechanisms;

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Implementation and monitoring…..(continued)

- Conduct regular monitoring and evaluation of implementation of agreed social development plans
- Equip the project unit to undertake quantitative monitoring and engage an independent agency for qualitative evaluation
- Ensure M&E reports are discussed by decision makers
- Require reports to discuss actions taken on earlier recommendations
- Promote periodic public dissemination of implementation progress
- Conduct follow-up socioeconomic surveys at the completion of implementation to examine the impact of the development program
- Undertake remedial actions when necessary

Socially sustainable Hydropower Development

Institutional Structures

- Hydropower development usually involves a mix of public, quasi-public, private, civil society and NGO institutions
- A number of preparation and implementation problems result from institutions with inadequate capacity or insufficient coordination among institutions.
- Conduct simple institutional capacity reviews of all agencies involved in addressing social development issues
- Establish an institution mechanism for oversight and coordination of the entire social mitigation / development program
- Ensure access of institutions responsible for social mitigation / development to senior Management of the hydropower development entity
- Introduce periodic meetings to review progress on social and environmental impacts by senior management
- Discuss and establish institutional arrangements to address social issues after completion of the hydropower facility