

Name of Exercise: Development of an Environmental Master Plan for Bytom

Location: Municipality of Bytom, Poland

Participation Exercise under which Article? Article 7

Purpose of Participation Exercise:

The Master Plan is intended to define the environmental protection strategy and management in the next 30 years so as to improve the state of the environment in Bytom to an acceptable level. To do this economic, social and environmental policies were considered at the same time.

Background:

Sustainable development can only be implemented when one knows the present situation, the targets to be achieved and the scope of work to be undertaken. Therefore an inventory of problems relevant for Bytom was made, both in the community and industrial spheres. The industrial problems were monitored using a sample of a selected group of firms.

Both groups of problems served as points of reference in developing environmental policies for Bytom. The municipality developed a long-term environmental management plan – defining targets, strategies and major measures in: waste management, air pollution, water and wastewater management. The major measures laid the foundations for the municipal Environmental Action Plan (EAP). The EAP set up the tasks for the period of four years, while in the municipal Working Plan (WP) all the detailed activities to be taken within one year were outlined.

Participation Techniques Used:

A series of meetings with representatives of the Bytom employers were organised to develop an “Industrial Program of Environmental Activities.” The first meeting was held for the directors of the Bytom firms who appointed their environmental representatives, who – from then on – participated in the subsequent stages of the consultation as representatives of their firms. Meetings were held on a monthly basis for about one year. The crowning achievement was the signing of “the Declaration of Co-operation in Implementing the Environmental Master Plan for Bytom” by the directors of the Bytom firms during a special session of the City Council. Some 18 large firms in Bytom (including several major polluters) signed the Declaration. These included 4 coal mines, 3 metal mills, a heating plant, an energy utility, a meat processing plant, a rubber plant, a dairy and a machine factory.

Who participated?

The Municipal Office of Bytom, representatives of the Bytom employers, the Office of Katowice Province, the Provincial Environmental Inspection of Katowice. The public was also involved (see below) at the stage of implementation of the plan (i.e. with regard to Cleaner Production initiatives).

Stage(s) at which public participated in the process:

Members of the public participated at the stage of the preparation of “The Working Programme” and “the Environmental Action Plan,” both of which included the cost estimates of the projects planned in the coming years. The representatives of the Bytom firms put forward their comments and suggestions at special meetings organised in the Municipal Office. The consultation lasted for about one year.

The entire process started in 1993. The main stages were:

- Invitations sent out to companies
- Introductory meeting with the Directors of the companies
- Series of meetings with the company representatives designated by their Directors to work on the Master Plan. The work was carried out in working groups focusing on specific topics (water management, air protection, sewage management)
- Draft materials prepared by the working groups were consulted with the Directors for approval

- Final meeting and celebration (on May 25-26, 1995): introducing the Master Plan, adoption of the Master Plan by the City Council, and the signing of the "Declaration of Co-operation in Implementing the Environmental Master Plan for Bytom" by the Company Directors.

What information was made available?

The whole Master Plan was issued as a separate publication available to the public. At the same time, articles in the local press were published about the work on the Plan. In addition, a special session of the City Council was organised, to which representatives of the Bytom employers were invited. "The Program of Refinancing Modernisation of Heating Systems and Baking Ovens in Bakeries," one output from the Master Plan, was very widely publicised.

What was the outcome of the public participation exercise?

The public consultations during the developing of the Master Plan led later to a great degree of public involvement, for example in the organisation of the "Bytom Cleaner Production School," which was a result of an agreement among the Municipal Office of Bytom and the National Centre of Cleaner Production Implementation at the Central Mining Institute. The school was set up as part of developing a stable environmental management system based on prevention. The activities targeted three main areas: industrial, community and educational. The total of over 20 firms and institutions represented by about 50 participants of the School took part in the programme. In the first phase, during a week long theoretical training in Bytom, the school participants got acquainted with the notion of sustainable development, Cleaner Production problems, waste minimisation and Environmental Management Systems. Next, work started on developing specific Cleaner Production projects under the supervision of experienced CP experts in the firms participating in the programme. Another phase of the work on the CP projects included two consultation meetings.

The above activities led to the implementation of CP projects in 14 Bytom firms. Those model CP projects should serve as inspiration to introduce and operate the Environmental Management System in the municipality according with the CP idea. Summing up, the CP School would encourage possible changes in the production processes, which could bring about combined economic and environmental effects. The school ended with the defence of the projects cases and presenting the school graduates with certificates of a CP and Environmental Management expert.

The effective publicity of the "Programme of Refinancing" resulted in the implementation of about 2,100 project proposals, and consequently in the reduction of coal consumption by 15,000 tons annually. The Plan was adopted at a final meeting and celebration on May 25-26, 1995.

Comments of participants in the process:

The development of the strategic programme for the environment has resulted in more effective allocation of existing finances for environmental protection – finance made available for instance by the Municipal and County Funds of Environmental Protection and Water Management. The direct contact with representatives of firms helps to get a better insight into the actual needs of the city and to take decisions providing for its better management.

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REC view on participation exercise:

This case had positive results in the form of exchange of information and development of specific measures resulting in the reduction of the use of resources and amount of pollution. However, the public participation aspect of the case study appears to involve more expert and stakeholder participation within a narrow circle, rather than a wide public participation process involving the public at large and a broad range of civil society actors. The exercise did not target the public as such but only the large enterprises, in particular the largest employers and polluters. The ad hoc nature of the exercise would seem to favour the participation of insiders and organised groups.

Significant omissions from requirements of Article 7:

While the purpose of the participation was exemplary, the full requirements of Article 7 – in particular the requirements for time frames within a transparent and fair framework – appear not to have been met. The exercise, as mentioned above, was targeted at specific enterprises and did not include all the concerned public.