

# Public behavior for public participation in EIA process, Turkey

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**Abstract:** Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has been implemented in Turkey since 1993. EIA Regulation has been revised for adoption and harmonization to European Union (EU) Directives several times. Considering the procedural steps of EU EIA directive, revised EIA Regulation adopts most of the required steps. Public participation has been implemented since 1993 in Turkey. Public participation was obligatorily implemented for Annex II projects by 2002. Turkey is the 18<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world and is one of the largest countries in Europe with a variety of cultural differences between the regions of Turkey. Due to this reason, the behavior of the public shows different interests even for similar types of projects. During the public participation meetings, public interest may differ according to their income, education level and special interests. This Paper will elaborate the behavior of people considering energy and mining projects that were conducted between 1995 and 2015.

## I. Introduction

Turkey has been implementing its EIA Regulation since 1993. Turkey became an official candidate to European Union in 1999 and harmonization of European Union (EU) EIA Directive (Council Directive 85/337/EEC of 27 June 1985 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment) studies was initiated at the beginning of 2001. MATRA programs [1] financed by The Netherlands have been implemented in Turkey [2]. “Approximation and implementation of EIA Directive in Turkey” project [3] was implemented between 2001 and 2002. “Establishment of EIA Training and Information Center” project [3] was implemented between 2004 and 2006. EIA Handbook and Sectoral EIA Guidelines for 12 sectors have been introduced [4]. The Sectoral Approximation Strategy project [3] was implemented for Ministry of Environment and targets for each sector have been determined.

## II. EIA Regulation revisions in Turkey.

EIA Regulation drafted by the Ministry of Environment enacted on 7<sup>th</sup> February, 1993 was based on US and EU procedures and amended three times within first decade on 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 1997 and amended on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2002 and on 16 December 2003.

Other amendments realized in order to have more effective EIA implementations on 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2008 and on 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2013 and 25<sup>th</sup> November 2014 and amended five times for changes on the articles of the regulation on different dates.

During last 23 years, internet usage and other innovative implementations have become part of governmental implementation. E-EIA is a new implementation of EIA Process that becomes a part of e-government system in 2012 in which all stakeholders provide their opinion electronically without the need for paper based EIA Reports. This implementation saved time, energy and natural resources, and EIA procedures have been reduced for the days of delivering and printing the reports.

Another important change involves the public participation process, which begins before the scoping stage since 2002 revision. At the end of EIA process, final EIA Report opened to the general public for ten working days [5]. On the other hand, the decision and the reason for the decision for the project are not directly declared to public [5]. As a result, environmental information gathered by the developer is made available to the public within a reasonable time during EIA process, before development consent is granted. Authorization of EIA consultant firms decided by the Ministry and EIA consultant firms are responsible either preparation of EIA Reports or monitoring the EIA Projects during the construction period. Monitoring reports are submitted to Ministry during the construction phase of the project.

### III. Public Participation

Public participation process includes some activities in EIA Regulation. EIA Regulation revisions reflect these activities. During first ten years of EIA Regulation between 1993 and 2002, EIA Public Participation Meeting was organized close to project site for Annex I and Annex II projects of EIA Regulation. This was approximately 100 Annex I projects/year (683 EIA Decision between 1994 and 2001) and 3000 Annex II projects/year [6]. After 2002, EIA Public Participation Meeting for Annex II projects has been excluded from EIA Process. EIA Reports opened to public by means of internet, made available to Public at the Ministry and also at the Provincial directorates. After completing the EIA process and final EIA Report, opens to the view of Public by the same procedures. Flowchart of Public involvement and EIA process are provided in following flowcharts (Figure 1).

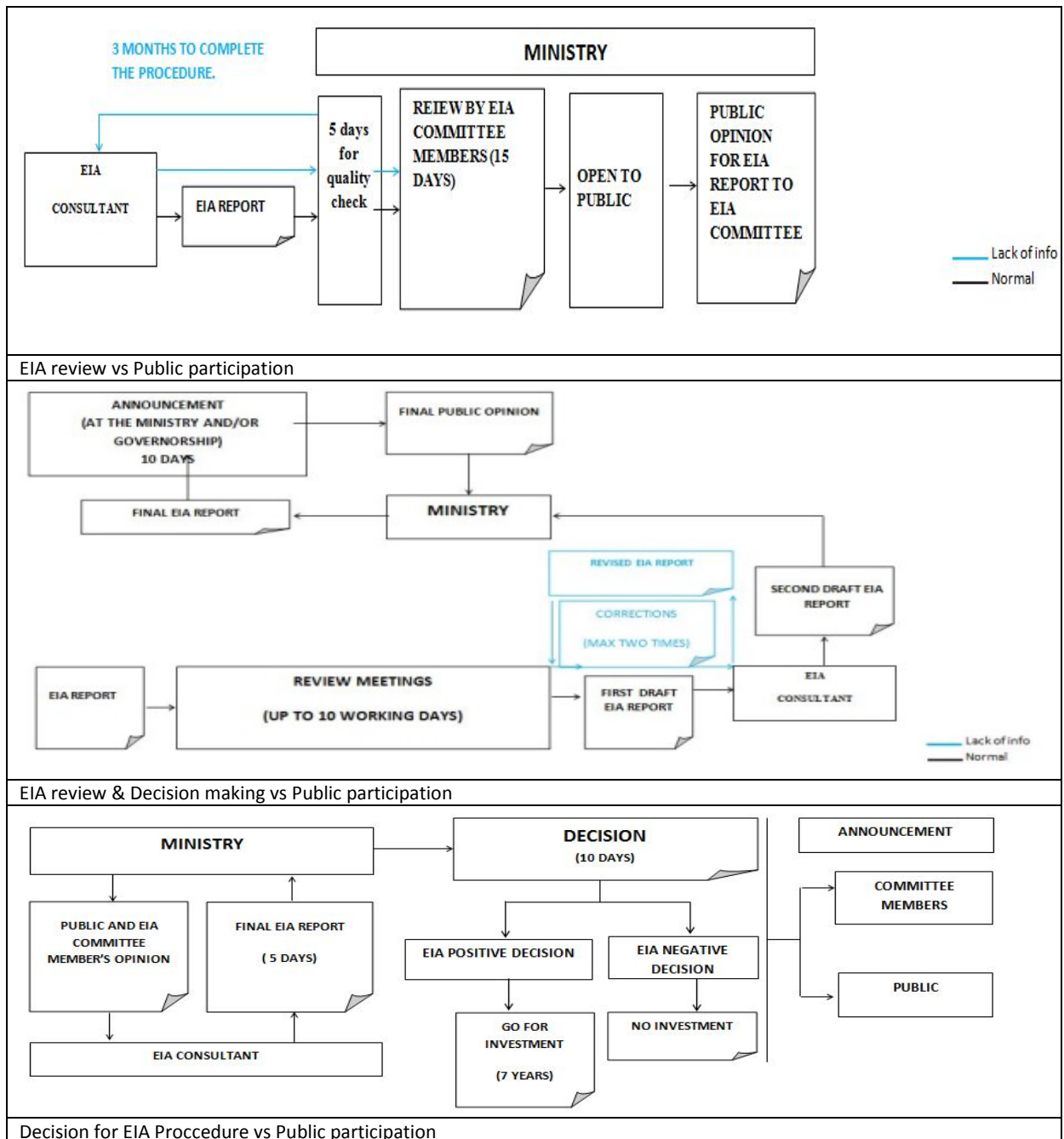


Figure 1: Flowchart of Public involvement and EIA process

#### IV. Spectrum of Public participation.

The Spectrum [7] is organized around the principle that the level of public participation is directly tied to the level of potential public influence on the decision or action being considered (Table 1). This potential influence can vary anywhere from none at all to total. The spectrum is designed to understand the key levels that should be considered within these extremes for designing a public participation program.

Table 1: Spectrum of Public participation.

	<b>Increasing Level of Public Impact</b>				
	<b>Inform</b>	<b>Consult</b>	<b>Involve</b>	<b>Collaborate</b>	<b>Empower</b>
Public participation goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
Example techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Fact sheets</li> <li>■ Web sites</li> <li>■ Open houses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Public comment</li> <li>■ Focus groups</li> <li>■ Surveys</li> <li>■ Public meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Workshops</li> <li>■ Deliberative polling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Citizen advisory committees</li> <li>■ Consensus-building</li> <li>■ Participatory decision-making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Citizen juries</li> <li>■ Ballots</li> <li>■ Delegated decision</li> </ul>

The level of EIA Public participation in Turkey is at consultation level. EIA Public Participation meeting provides an opportunity to the public to express their own ideas about the project and the secretary of the meeting prepares minutes of meeting for EIA Committee. Involve level of public participation for EIA Process requires direct communication with the stakeholders and requires organizing regular meetings and workshops. Environmental NGO's established in local level or national may increase level of participation and impact discussions. Unfortunately, level of EIA process bounded with regular one day meeting. Everyone may provide his/her opinion by means of e-mail and submitting a petition is a right of being a citizen in Turkey.

#### IV. Behavior of Public during Public Participation

The writer of this paper has participated more than 50 Public Participation Meetings between 1995 and 2008. Most of the meeting was related with energy sector and mostly Hydro Electricity Projects (HEP) and Thermal Power stations. Considering the most attractive and conflicted projects, three projects have been chosen for this paper.

- A- Dilek-Guroluk HEP  
Project owner: BME Holding  
Project Place: Rize Province, Camlihemsin District  
EIA Report submission: May 1997  
Court decision: 19/05/1998, Archeological site decision.  
Public participation Meeting: March 1998  
EIA Positive Decision: 26 June 1998  
Forest Permit: 18/09/1998  
February 1999: Court stops the project.  
2001: Court decides, EIA decision cancelled. Project stopped.

During EIA process, public behavior was easy to understand. They were completely against the project and public objection was well organized. Many people participated in the meeting in Ankara since they spent some time (summer time especially) in that region. The sole supporter to the project was the project owner and their staff. Duration of the meeting was more than four hours. Participated people were more than 400. Income of the people was middle level. Education level was less for local people and higher for living outside the project site. There was no personal demand during the meeting.

- B- Çan Thermal Power Plant. 2 x 160 MW  
Project owner: Ministry of Energy  
Project Place: Canakkale Province, Can District  
EIA Report submission: September 1998  
Public participation Meeting: February 1999  
EIA Positive Decision: 13.08.1999  
Capacity: 330 MW.

Public participation meeting was held in a cinema. There were 300 people participating at the meeting. They were well organized, including Doctors, teachers, lawyers, university students, NGO's, tourism associations, environmental associations, local people, residents living close to projects, villagers and farmers expressed their opinion about the project. Discussions were in a very positive way, they were trying to understand what kind of environmental impacts may arise, what will happen to their farm products. Project area is 25 km away from Ida Mountain where Helen and Paris have met. Historically very attractive area, Troy is 70 km. Gallipoli peninsula is 60 km. There are valuable agriculture lands for apple production close to project area and farmers were asking what may happen to their business. The project owner, representative of Ministry of Energy experts responded the questions are in detail, explain the fluidized bed furnace system which was the ever applied technology in Turkey, establishment of flue gas desulfurization unit, continuous air quality measurements, auditing the system computer based etc. Meeting was ended with a view that as soon as the promises being hold by the governmental organizations, there will be min adverse impacts. People never demanded for any job or personal interest during the meeting.

Project area has lignite coal and reserves so high that Can-2 Thermal Power Plant was established. EIA report was approved on 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2015.

- C- Afşin-Elbistan B-Thermal Power Plant  
Project owner: Ministry of Energy  
Project Place: Kahramanmaraş Province, Afşin District  
EIA Report submission: August 1998  
Public participation Meeting: December 1998  
EIA Positive Decision: 19.10.1999  
Capacity: 1440 MW, (4x360 MW)

Afşin coal basin includes 45 % of lignite reserves of Turkey. Afşin A-Thermal Power Plant was established without flue gas desulfurization unit and causes environmental problems, ash and particular matter problems for

living environment. Public participation meeting was held at the premises of Afşin A-Thermal Power Plant. Participants were some of the staff of current plant and local people representatives, villagers. Participants were not organized; no environmental associations participated to meeting. People in that region are generally poor, economical expectations from the project was high. EIA Consultant responsible for agricultural production analysis expressed that annual production for food production is likely to decline in coming years due to Thermal Power Plant. Probability to have cancer in this region will be higher within this region, etc. One of the participants expressed his opinion as “I am 25, no job during last 3 years, no family. So, I am ready to die from cancer after 25 years later, I am ready to work in this plant.”

Construction was completed in 2004. Due to time losses in coal production, only two units were able begin to generate the electricity with long distance coal transportation. This problem was solved in 2009.

Table 2: General specification of Public who attended to Public Participation Meeting.

	<b>Rize/ÇamlıHemşin HEP</b>	<b>Canakkale Thermal PP.</b>	<b>Afşin Thermal PP.</b>
Support to project	No	Neutral	Yes
Public/well organized, NGO's	Yes	Yes	No
Participants (Local/National)	National + Local	Local	Local
Duration of meeting	+4 hours	+2 hours	1 hour
Income	Average	Average	poor
Education	Local less, national high	Average	Less
Personal demands	No	Agriculture/Forest	Job, economical

#### V. Recent Developments on EIA Public Participation Meetings

In 1998, there was no internet at the Ministry. E-mail usage was restricted. During last ten years, social media and internet provided extra opportunities for people to discuss the environmental matters at all levels of the community. Achieving information is easy, participating forums and discussions are fruitful for them.

Ministry has been using E-EIA system since 2012 [ref 8]. Easy access to all EIA Reports is available without any payment. Level of participation to EIA process is easy. Behavior of public expected to be change in time in positive manner. During last few years, level of EIA public participation meetings turned to protesting platforms. Many EIA public participation meetings have not been conducted due to this reason. For instance, in energy sector 20 % of EIA Public participation meetings could not be realized due to such protests. As the communication level and access to information increase, people or organized protesting groups decrease or prevents level of participation.

#### VI. Conclusions

Public participation meetings enable citizens to discuss the project details and its adverse impacts with EIA consultants and project owners. People express their opinions and interest related with the projects. Public behavior changes according to level of income, education level and personal interest during these meetings.

As incomes increase, environmental awareness increases, however with lower income levels, people are even ready to have environmental impacts. As education levels increase, people are sensitive to environmental matters, even if it occurs in thousands of km from them. Personal expectations may determine people's behavior on both sides.

In order to increase the Spectrum of Public participation level from consult level to involve level, NGO's should participate more in the EIA system. Cooperation levels should be increased; methodology for this purpose should be progressed. Collaborative studies should be jointly developed with Chamber of Professionals and Chamber of Unions by means of EIA Training and Information Center. As a member of G-20 [9] and OECD [10], Turkey has such dynamics in both the private and governmental sectors.

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