

## Public Awareness Workshop on Tsageri-lentekhi on Tskhenistskali HPP Project

**DATE:** 05.13.2011

**VENUE:** Tsageri Municipality (Gamgeoba) Building

**Speakers:**

**Dennis McCandless**, HIPP Project, Black & Veatch, Professional Engineer  
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**Background:**

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the Hydropower Investment Promotion Project (HIPP) supports development of a minimum 400 MW in new, run-of-the-river hydropower stations in Georgia. This project is managed by Deloitte Consulting. As part of this program, HIPP has identified a cluster of project sites along the Tskhenistskali River. HIPP is now conducting pre-feasibility studies for two projects with a total capacity of 230 MW. These two HPP sites are on the River Tskhenistskali in Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti Region, near Lentekhi and Tsageri.

The HIPP team is preparing basic technical studies to evaluate the technical and economical feasibility of the projects. As part of this process, public awareness workshop was held in Tsageri community to ensure community involvement at the early planning stage, identify areas of community concern, and gather feedback from local residents.

The project profiles, HIPP information leaflets and USAID energy map was used as supportive documentation. Meeting agenda, advertisement, list of participants and photos are attached to this document as illustrative materials.

**Aim of the Workshop:**

- To increase awareness of local communities on small and medium run-of-the-river hydro power plans and promote their support to such activities;
- To inform local community the goal of the project and ensure their involvement at the early planning stage;
- Identify community concerns regarding the possible development of the project and gain their feedback; ensure positive attitude towards the project and increase cooperation perspectives between public and project developers.

**Workshop Process:**

The purpose of the meetings was to provide information and get the opinions of the locals related to the project. The date, place and the scope of these meeting was preliminary informed and agreed with Tsageri and Lentekhi Municipalities during HIPP team field visits. Meeting date and venue were agreed with local Municipalities; Public workshop was announced through advertisements and distributed to the both municipalities as well as distributed through electronic media sources (CENN mailing list).

The primary stakeholders (landowners, vendors, hawkers, and local authorities) were identified by HIPP team and informal meetings were conducted beforehand during field trips. During those preliminary meetings stakeholders were informed about the planned public awareness workshop and were asked their attendance. Besides, HIPP team facilitated attendance of both municipality members on the workshop. Totally 45 community members were attending the workshop (attached see list of participants).

During the workshop HIPP team members provide information about project in general, and discussed technical characteristics of the proposed HPP project as well as possible environmental and social impact. Issue that project will not create significant impoundment causing displacement of adjacent population was stressed during the workshop.

The HIPP team stressed the importance of public participation in early project design phase. Participants have been asked to express their opinion/attitude towards the project in general as well as impact on environment and socio-economic conditions of their household.

The municipality representatives mentioned a few considerations about the project impacts both environmental and socio-economic point of view.

**Key issues/concerns rose by community members were as follows:**

- Few questions were asked about the landslide risks and previous experiences with similar types of projects such as Ladjanuri HPP; Lajanuri reservoir is 25.0 million m<sup>3</sup> on overall, useful volume is 17.0 million m<sup>3</sup> and surface area is 1.6 km<sup>2</sup>. The Lajanuri reservoir operates the Lajanuri HPP with installed capacity of 112 MW; reservoir entered into operation in 1960. Currently reservoir is full with sediments. Frequent uninformed release of the water from reservoir cause impact on downstream population and land users (water floods their agricultural lands and homes);
- Local benefits of project; Community members were interested whether they could benefit from the low electricity tariffs;
- To employ local population during the project implementation;

Certain fear of local population relates to possible change of ecological conditions within the project impact area resulting in negative outcomes for agricultural, historical-cultural objects as well as increase of landslide risks; Laganuri hadro is already operating in Tsageri community and the development of two more hydro's (Namakhvani and Tsageri-Lentekhi) has been planned. This issue triggered community members to questioning the cumulative impact on Tskhenistskali watershed from operating three hydro power plants.

## **CONCLUSIONS:**

The Tsageri public awareness workshop outcome is as follows:

- Generally, community's attitude towards the project development is positive; Community members think they could benefit from development of project in case the project developers properly consider their concerns/suggestions and watershed characteristics. On the other hand, community members are willing to cooperate with HPP project developers. From operation of the HPP local population expects to receive new job opportunities;
- It was agreed that further development of the project would be further discussed with the community members.

## **Other Needs and Suggestions**

- For ensuring participatory attitudes and practices in HPP community it would be reasonable to develop informative leaflet covering issues associated with the project development, including environmental implications and distribute to the communities during organizing the meetings.

The table below shows the public awareness meeting in Tsageri municipality.

**Table 1. Pictures of the public awareness workshop**



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