

Sharing Transition Experience among the EU Member States, the Balkan Countries, and the Commonwealth of Independent States

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Introduction

Legacy of neglected environmental problems of the previous regimes is a common concern both of New Member States of the EU and countries of Eastern Europe, Western Balkans and CIS region.

Severe contamination of land and waters as well as impacts of extensive economies on climate, natural resources, agriculture and human health in particular call for urgent but effective and sustainable solutions.

Sharing transition experience

Workshop participants used the opportunity to discuss existing and emerging problems, own transition experience and lessons learned.

Inputs from the Czech Republic:

- A) Emerging donor experience
- B) Experience with environment protection in the EU accession period

presentations by Martin Naprstek, Czech Development Agency

Czech Official Development Assistance

Czech development assistance can build on historical links of former Czechoslovakia with developing and transition countries as well as on quite recent experience of aid recipient.

On the other hand, heritage of economic and political motivations resulted among others in fragmented and ineffective ODA system.

Key steps towards simplification and stronger coordination were done in 2008 by changing ODA framework and establishing Czech Development Agency. Transformation is to be completed in 2010.

Environmental priorities within Czech ODA

30 environmental projects in 2008 in total amount of 4,36 million EUR (20,7 % of bilateral projects) confirm that environment is the second most important sector (economic cooperation 31 %, agriculture 16,3 %, education 7 %).

Projects were implemented in Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Expertise in environmental sector comes in particular from a traditional Czech „geological school“ and from own transition experience (past environmental burdens, *acquis communitaire*, competitiveness).

Key constraints and limitations

- Budget constraints
- Stand-alone projects and programs
- Limited presence in the field
- Legal obstacles
- Lack of capacities
- Supply driven projects
- Low support linked to insufficient awareness
- Low level of trust to partner countries administration
- Irrelevant objectives of and limited access to EC programmes

Other countries face similar problems...

Environment experience in transition period

- Absolute ignorance of environment until 1989 (except for interest and pressure from NGOs)
- Modern environmental legislation since early 90th
- End-of-pipe solutions in first years resulted in rapid improvements of environment, on the other hand led to lack of investment to clean technologies and preventive measures; sustainability was endangered
- Well developed system of assessment and remediation of the past environmental burdens, high expertise, but critical deficiencies at procedural level (around 4,5 billion EUR not spent since 1995)
- Strong pressure in EU accession period

Lessons learned and shared - challenges

- Ownership and support also at a local level
- Clear setting of roles and responsibilities
- Clear priorities and strategies (systemic approach)
- Adequate legal and financial frameworks
- Partnership across sectors (PPP) and multiactors cooperation
- Capacity building
- Considering causalities and consequences
- Trust in local expertise
- Long term vision („six generations“)

Summary / Conclusions

1. Recognition that „newcomers“ are knowledge holders – this knowledge is to be delivered
2. ODA is a relevant option and PPP is a very relevant instrument
3. Need to challenge number of barriers (financial frames, human resources, legal framework...)
4. Focus on systemic changes and solutions, on effectiveness and sustainability
5. Effective delivery needs capacity building and nurturing