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Implementing a Well-structured and Robust Public Consultation and Disclosure Plan utilizing Innovative Communication Techniques

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Abstract

As the country's largest-ever industrial investment project, it is essential for Yemen LNG Company (hereinafter referred to as the Company) to raise awareness of the Project activities among affected communities, and to define and manage stakeholder expectations. This paper describes the formation and implementation of the Company's innovative Public Consultation and Disclosure Plan (PCDP).

Implementing the PCDP is a continuous process to ensure ongoing consultation and engagement between the Company, the communities, Government, NGOs and the media. This has included the development of; a field-based community relations team, project awareness campaigns (school visits and village open houses), high-level open houses, press conferences, community newsletters and the formation of a grievance mechanism to ensure that all grievances are recognized, recorded and followed-up. The paper therefore has transverse application to similar large energy projects in developing countries which have poor indigenous educational and awareness standards.

The Company developed the PCDP to guide and outline the consultation and stakeholder activities from the Project's pre-construction phase through to the operations and decommissioning phases. When formulating this PCDP, the specific circumstances in Yemen, associated challenges and the tribal-cultural environment had to be carefully considered. A consultative public participation process creates trust and builds relationships. Consulting with the communities plays a critical role in raising awareness of a project's impact and developing long-term stable relationships with those affected by the project, particularly the marginalized and vulnerable groups.

Throughout the Project, a great deal of experience, research and information about the affected communities, their level of comprehension of the project and the social and cultural structures which govern behaviour and access to information have been gathered. This paper shows how the implementation of a well-informed, culturally relevant plan can effectively be used to manage, engage, inform and gather feedback from stakeholders in a collaborative manner and it evaluates how the challenges were addressed. The communication strategies, tools and lessons learned were significant, and they provide excellent examples to other projects of effective communication techniques which, when adapted to specific cultural circumstances, can be appropriately used in any large energy development project.

1 INTRODUCTION

Governments, financing institutions and the public increasingly call upon the private sector to address the environmental and social challenges of a development. A well structured and robust Public Consultation and Disclosure Plan is crucial in addressing these challenges as the long-term sustainability of investments is critically dependent on good relations with all stakeholders.

The purposes of this paper are threefold: firstly to demonstrate the structure of, and reasoning for, the Company's Public Consultation and Disclosure Plan (PCDP) and Public Consultation and Disclosure Plan Addendum (PCDPA); secondly to discuss the function, including the planning and implementation, of these Plans which adopted innovative stakeholder engagement and information disclosure techniques to communicate project updates and key messages; and thirdly to discuss ongoing monitoring of activities and lessons learned.

This paper shows how the implementation of a well-informed, culturally relevant PCDP can be used effectively to manage, engage, inform and gather feedback from stakeholders in a collaborative manner. Valuable insights are provided on how the implementation of such a plan, based on best-practice techniques, can encourage community buy-in and serve as an effective means of addressing stakeholder issues and concerns.

The introductory section is followed by a brief overview of the Project background and location. This is followed by discussions on the structure and functioning of the PCDP and PCDDA that includes a discussion of the various techniques, messages and activities which have been used to ensure fair and effective project communication, including the open houses, school awareness activities, community relations and written material. The paper concludes with a brief discussion on the monitoring of activities and lessons learned.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Yemen Liquefied Natural Gas project was launched in August 2005 to design, construct and operate a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) plant located on the Southern coastline of Yemen. The main Project components include modifications to the Marib upstream gas processing facilities, located in central Yemen, a 320 kilometre pipeline to transfer the feed gas from the Marib fields to Balhaf on the Arabian Sea and a liquefaction plant situated at Balhaf where the gas will be liquefied and stored on site, before being transferred into the LNG carriers for transport to the international markets. This Project, the largest ever industrial project in Yemen's history, marks a significant milestone which demonstrates the commitment of the Yemeni Government and the Company shareholders to Yemen's future development and economic growth over the 20 to 25 years of commercial production.

3 PROJECT LOCATION

Yemen (Figure 1) is divided into nineteen Governorates and one municipality. The Project area falls within two of the Governorates namely Shabwah and Marib.

Shabwah is situated within the geographical area known as the East of Yemen, has an area of 73,908km² and is divided into 17 districts. The landscape comprises coastal desert, plateau, plains and an extended coastline along the Gulf of Aden. The capital of the Shabwa Governorate (Ataq) is located 458km South-east of Sana'a. Ras Balhaf is at the western end of the important marine environment supporting the principal fish landings in the Shabwah Governorate. The Ras Balhaf area is the centre of the local fishing industry and of seasonal importance to fishermen from all parts of Yemen. The Plant is located near Balhaf on Yemen's south coast approximately 140km west of the port city of Al Mukalla and 380km east of Aden. The Project includes a pipeline connection to the existing oil and gas production facilities of the Marib fields in Block 18, to supply the gas to feed the Plant.

Marib is the capital of the Marib Governorate. The modern city of Marib is located about 3.5km north of the centre of the ancient city. The Governorate has an area of 31,418 km² and is divided into 14 districts. Marib occupies a region rich in natural gas reserves and is the Governorate from which most natural gas and oil extraction projects in Yemen originate. Block 18, from which the Project sources its gas, is located in the desert area amongst a characteristic area of sand dunes. Although the area is not permanently inhabited, it is always crossed by nomadic tribesmen and Bedouins.

4 THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND DISCLOSURE PLAN (PCDP) AND PCDDA ADDENDUM (PCDDA) STRUCTURE

4.1 Definition

Public participation can be defined as the involvement of individuals and groups of people who may be positively or negatively affected by a proposed intervention (such as a project, program, plan or policy) subject to a decision-making process, or who are interested in the intervention (André et al, 2006). Public participation can also be described as a tool for managing two-way communication between the project sponsor and the public with the goal to improve decision-making and to build understanding by actively involving individuals, groups and organizations who have a stake in the project (IFC, 1998:12). A consultative public participation process is not a one-off activity, but is an ongoing and interactive process. It creates trust, builds relationships and plays a critical role in raising awareness of the project's impacts and developing long-term stable relationships with those affected by the project, particularly the marginalised and vulnerable groups.

4.2 Objectives

PCDP objectives are key to the success of stakeholder consultation and to ensure that activities are not an end in itself but that they serve and are aligned with organisational objectives. Aligning the Company's communications and organisational objectives helps to reinforce the importance and relevance of communications and thereby makes a convincing case for the proper resourcing of communications activities by the Company.

The broader objective of the Company's PCDP and PCDDPA activities is to meet the specific needs of stakeholders by creating a structure for information to flow both to and from stakeholders. Specific objectives to achieve the broader goal include; developing long-term relationships with project stakeholders (Government, local communities, traditional authorities, NGOs, marginalised and vulnerable groups and any other interested and affected parties); supporting the creation of a stable operating environment; facilitating project communications, raising awareness of project developments and creating opportunities for the community to ask questions, discuss issues of concern and make suggestions.

4.3 Approach

In the absence of Yemeni national regulations on public consultation and disclosure, the activities detailed in the Public Consultation and Disclosure Plan are based on regulations, standards and guidelines set in place by the World Bank Group (WBG) and specifically its private sector financing arm, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), and by international conventions, which the Government of Yemen has signed and ratified. The consultation and disclosure requirements based on IFC and WBG are outlined in Figure 2.

The PCDP is a 'living document' and may be revised over time to reflect information gained through the consultation and disclosure process. An Addendum to the PCDP (PCDDPA) has recently been developed which builds on the objectives, recommendations and actions of the PCDP as the project completes construction and enters a stable operational phase. The purpose of the PCDP Addendum is to identify and discuss stakeholder engagement actions and processes and provide a structure for the social management framework which will be implemented during the operations phase. The PCDP Addendum expands on the PCDP issued in 2006; particularly identifying the 'Consultation during Operations' and the accompanying objectives for consultation undertaken during an operating environment.

4.4 Project Phases

Various methods of consultation and communication have been undertaken in the different project phases since the initial scoping of the project in 1997. When the project was revived in 2005 the project timeline and project phases were identified as follows (Table 1).

Table 1: Project Phases

Phase 1	1997 to August 26th 2005 Initial Consultation and Planning Scoping the ESIA update and review
Phase 2	August 26th 2005 to April 30th 2006 Pre-Construction ESIA Disclosure and Consultation
Phase 3	April 30th 2006 to end of Construction period 2009 Construction Consultation Consultation and management of community relations during construction
Phase 4	Mid 2009 to future Operations and Decommissioning Consultation Ongoing consultation and management of community relations

4.4.1 Phase 1: Initial Consultation

The Company began the public consultation process in 1997 which is recognised as the beginning of Phase 1: Initial Consultation. Prior to project sanction in August 2005, the public consultation and disclosure activities undertaken by the Company were generally restricted to national government and some governorate level discussions. Since August 2005 the project has invested significant efforts in expanding the reach and effectiveness of its PCD approach to inform and engage with stakeholders within Yemen and the wider international community.

4.4.2 Phase 2: Pre-Construction Consultation

Pre-Construction Consultation included the recruitment of resources with experience in public consultation and stakeholder engagement, intensive stakeholder identification and a program of regular, systematically documented, consultations and disclosure events including workshops, public and community meetings, press conferences, site household surveying and establishing a project website on which the ESIA was publicly disclosed in February 2006.

4.4.3 Phase 3 (Construction) and Phase 4 (Operations)

Public consultation during Construction and Operations of the project is key to maintaining the good relationship the project has established with affected people during the ESIA process in the pre-Construction phase. Based on the lessons learnt in Phases 1 and 2, the Company developed objectives for Phase 3 (construction) and Phase 4 (operations) of the PCDP. The objectives were identified with the aim of achieving a greater degree of transparency and responsiveness to stakeholder issues and concerns. The overarching objectives of the 2006 PCDP remain relevant within the PCDP Addendum as discussed in 4.3.4.

4.4.4 Linkages between the PCDP, ESIA, ESMP, RAP and SCDP

This PCDP is an integral part of the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) of the Project. The PCDP is part of a suite of environmental and social management plans which have been developed to support the Project Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS). Although the PCDP and PCDPA are separate documents, these should not be viewed as stand-alone documents, as the objectives, processes, actions and commitments discussed in these plans are linked to, and stem from, the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP). This is the means by which mitigation measures identified in the ESIA are implemented. The ESMP also includes; the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) and Sustainable Community Development Plan (SCDP) (Chetty *et al.*, 2009). The linkages between the PCDP, ESIA, ESMP, RAP and SCDP are outlined in Figure 3.

4.4.5 Stakeholder Identification

A stakeholder is considered to be an individual, organisation, or community that is affected by the proposed project, or that holds an interest in the project. The World Bank (1996) defines two types of stakeholders: primary or key stakeholders who are directly affected (positively or negatively) by the proposed project; and secondary stakeholders who are indirectly affected by the proposed project.

Stakeholder identification on this project began in 1997, prior to the first EIA and it continues to be refined throughout the project lifespan. Intensive stakeholder engagement specifically with regards to social issues and livelihoods of project affected people has been underway since mid 2005. Stakeholder identification was undertaken to determine all of the organisations and individuals who may be directly or indirectly affected (positively or negatively) by the proposed development and who may be able to contribute to the Project due to their knowledge of and/or experience in the region.

Primary Stakeholders

The project's primary stakeholders include Project Affected People (PAP) in addition to local and central government and government agencies involved with, and exposed to, project activities and Project employees. In terms of the project itself, PAPs are defined as the communities, households and individuals (mainly fishermen and their families) who live in close proximity to the project site. In the Shabwa Governorate, PAP could be defined at village level, as there are 22 clearly defined villages within the 5km corridor either side of the pipeline right of way (ROW) and in the vicinity of the Balhaf liquefaction plant. PAP also include the Bedouin settlements and small family groups who are a feature in the Governorate of Marib, and smaller permanent or itinerant groups who do not belong within the structure of the established villages.

As part of the preparation of the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) and the project's public consultation and disclosure (PCD) approach, the Company has undertaken socio-economic household surveying, both along the pipeline Right Of Way (ROW) and around the Balhaf site. The surveys were carried out to assess the nature of the potential project impacts on land and livelihoods during construction and over the life of the project. The implementation of the Company's sustainable community investment programmes has required considerable research and consultation with communities along the ROW and in the coastal area to

further identify potential project impacts and identify beneficiaries. The reinstatement and livelihood restoration along the ROW also requires ongoing surveys to identify households which require livelihood restoration initiatives to achieve compliance with RAP commitments to support SD programme implementation.

A practical technique that was used to help identify the full range of project affected groups was community and impact zone mapping (see Figure 4 as an example). The Project survey teams completed this exercise in each of the seven areas with the Community Consultative Committees and with community members through separate meetings with women as well as with men. General maps of the different areas were generated which identified the specific resources important to them and their position in relation to each other. Through this technique, assessment of different levels of impact for geographically distinct groups and prioritization of stakeholders could be done (Yemen LNG RAP, 2007:95).

Secondary Stakeholders

Secondary stakeholders include those who have links (for example technical expertise) with primary stakeholders as well as interested parties who may be able to influence the outcome of the project, either because they can contribute knowledge or ideas to improve project design or mitigate environmental and social impacts, or because they have political influence on the project which needs to be considered. They normally include non-governmental organisations (NGOs), various intermediary or representative organisations, technical and professional bodies often representing public interests (The World Bank, 1996:276).

The Yemen project's secondary stakeholders include; Governmental Companies, National Development Agencies, Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Multi and Bilateral Agencies including Embassies, Cultural/Archaeological Institutes, Local Business/Industry Associations/Unions; Media Organisations and Investors and Financial Institutions.

Identification of and consultation with stakeholder representatives, especially community leaders, proved to be an efficient way to disseminate information to community members and receive information from them.

The list of stakeholders was defined and updated as the project evolved, however the Bedouin nature of people in some of the project affected areas led to difficulties in maintaining an up-to-date stakeholder database due to the movement of people, for example the nomadic tribes in the Northern part of Marib. There were also difficulties in defining the impacted population as some people (Bedouins) were only impacted temporarily.

4.4.6 Stakeholder Analyses

The IFC emphasises the need for public consultation processes which are socially and culturally appropriate, sensitive and accessible to all potentially affected parties, from national to local level (International Finance Corporation, 1998). Stakeholder assessments are therefore an important step to take before preparing or revising a public participation strategy. Each stakeholder group is different and has its own way of getting people interested. Important institutions and groups vary from place to place, as well socioeconomic status including literacy levels, culture and traditions, political and religious activity, and values. Stakeholder analyses, especially in the two Governorates namely Shabwah and Marib were essential to designing the public participation activities and messages to be effective for the different stakeholder groups.

Tribal Context, Local Governance and Institutional Structures

Yemen's population is predominantly Arab, but includes some Afro-Arab, South Asians and Europeans. Arabic is the official language, although English is increasingly used and understood in major cities. Yemeni society is characterized by tribal affiliations and structure, especially in the northern and eastern parts of the country. The following sections describe the tribal structures in Shabwah and Marib with which the Company became familiar; and the impacts of the varying structures on project construction and community relations.

Shabwah

The three most important tribal confederations in the Shabwah Governorate along the pipeline Right of Way are the Bani Hillal, Na'aman and Hemyar confederations. These tribal confederations can easily mobilise and motivate many sub-tribes to confront the military when necessary. The influence of the tribal structure depends partly on the area/region and mostly on the type of human settlement. For example where there is no form of permanent human congregation and the community is spread over a tribal region, there is no single authority or individual which has jurisdiction over the people. For this reason, the tribe rarely appears as a united group when defending their interests. On the contrary, when there is human concentration, this creates solidarity and the Sheikh assumes jurisdiction of the community with a defined role and a more robust approach to communication with, for example the Company's community liaison staff.

In the southern part of Shabwah, English and socialist influences over time have mostly erased the traditional tribal structure. However the former Sheikh's families still attempt to control and have power over the community. Two types of behaviours dominate in this type of culture, namely to refuse any kind of cooperation from external sources (including industrial projects); and to cooperate as well as possible with anyone or any organisation willing to contribute to the communities' development.

The success of either type of behaviour essentially depends on the group's solidarity. Tribal context is therefore best studied on a 'case by case' basis requiring research and discussion with community relations staff to appreciate the situation and prepare a way forward. A general assessment would fail to provide an accurate understanding of the tribal situation and may result in decision making that exacerbates problems rather than provide solutions.

A Governor has been elected by the local councils (district representatives), and a General District Manager heads each district. The Governor has a hierarchical link with the army and each Governorate has a security manager who is in charge of the police force and any Governmental forces.

From a political point of view, the area is under the jurisdiction of the district authorities, however from a traditional point of view the local population is under the jurisdiction of the various Sheikhs. Central Government has minimal control over the above four districts. From the communities' perspective, the local authorities are seen mainly as obscure and inefficient due to the general lack of welfare, support or service provision (such as health centres and education facilities). This creates problems between the political and traditional authorities and there are no established lines of trust.

From the people's perspective a climate of expectation has been established; by the nature of the Company presence. This requires careful management as YLNG has been assumed by project affected communities to be taking on the responsibilities of the Government in the project area. Expectation is high that YLNG will meet the development and welfare needs within the region. It is taking time to educate and communicate to project affected people the scope of responsibility and commitment which YLNG can and will make in the project area; especially with regard to what responsibilities still remain with Government.

Marib

The project area within the Marib Governorate is under the jurisdiction of the Abyda tribe. The Abyda tribe is made up of several sub-tribes with a high degree of solidarity, despite a strong but simmering rivalry between the sub-tribes. Issues between sub tribes are generally solved after mediation by Sheikhs and/or through the payment of compensation.

One of the most influential personalities of the Abyda tribe is the Marib Local Council General Secretary, Jabir al-Shabwani. His political and institutional position is due to his wealth (as an active businessman operating in the oil business) and his status within the tribe (he is a Sheikh). In general the army does not become involved in tribal conflicts and generally maintains a diplomatic relationship with tribesmen. When conflicts do occur, the army is not able to dominate the tribes without support.

The establishment of Local Councils (LC) is a recent development in Yemen. In Marib, communication on project and development issues was undertaken through Representatives of the Local Council.

Socio-Economic Profile

The main activities of the PAPs are livestock-rearing, the seasonal, rain-fed cultivation of cereals, and, along the coast, fishing. In the interior, livestock raising and seasonal cultivation are supplemented by bee-keeping, weaving and salt-mining. Paid work is rare and consists of the few government jobs (guard, police, army etc.), labouring (principally in construction: rainwater catchments or karifs, livestock pens, housing etc.) or the hiring out of a vehicle by its owner driver.

Yemenis are predominantly Muslim and divided into two principal Islamic religious groups, namely the the Zaidi sect of the Shi'a, found in the north and northwest, and the Shaf'i school of Sunni Muslims, found in the south and southeast. Yemenis are mainly of Semitic origin, although African strains are reportedly present among inhabitants of the coastal region. However, strains is not confirm of African religion along the coast through its survey work. It is understood that within the Governorates of Shabwa and Marib all communities follow Shaf'I school of Islam.

In Yemen it has been widely recognized that traditional social organizational structures, cultural practices and division of labour in Yemen put women and girls at risk of social and economic marginalization and exclusion. As a result women have

relatively weak social and economic rights, including restricted access to educational development, political representation, equal wages and good health care amongst other basic rights. This is particularly the case in rural areas and more remote communities. In these areas communicating directly with and understanding the needs of women are made difficult by customs and traditions, which determine that social hierarchies, community decision making bodies and local representative organizations are dominated by men.

Literacy levels are low, especially amongst women which mandates carefully developed mechanisms for accurate information sharing. Literacy levels and cognitive processes such as colour and shape association, and interpretation of images are taken into consideration when providing feedback to the communities and when communicating key messages. Low literacy levels are also linked to the general lack of feedback. Written language is not the most common method of communication in the project area; in the absence of literacy skills, the spoken language is the primary method of sharing and obtaining information.

A socio-cultural factor, which has the potential to affect the way project operations are run in Yemen, is the use of Qat - a leafy narcotic which when chewed produces feelings of euphoria and stimulation. The drug has become a major cultural phenomenon for Yemeni and Somali societies and has been the cause of conflict over production and distribution in these countries. The social protocol surrounding Qat use, in particular, has to be taken into account in consultation as it has the potential to shape or facilitate interactions between the Project team and Project Affected People, and may therefore partly determine the project's approach to the public consultation process itself.

NGOs

There are approximately 3,000 NGOs officially registered in Yemen, out of which it may be considered that 1,000 are active in some way. NGOs in Yemen are known to be active in the field of Human Rights. This includes details of organisations broadly active in areas relating to Human Rights and development, including; child rights and disabled rights, women's rights, education and empowerment, Health and Hygiene, Cultural and educational development, Agricultural development and environmental issues, Trade unions, trade associations and cooperatives and political organisations. In addition to NGOs there are also foreign development organisations which are active and influential in Yemen including bilateral agencies, international NGOs and multilateral agencies such as UNDP, WHO etc.

5 THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND DISCLOSURE PLAN (PCDP) AND PCDP ADDENDUM (PCDPA) - FUNCTIONING

5.1 Effective and Innovative Communication Techniques

Effective and innovative communication techniques and messages are important tools for stakeholder engagement and information disclosure. It is a means of sharing information which is packaged in different ways and conveyed, using media and messages customised for different audiences.

Implementing the PCDP and PCDPA utilising stakeholder engagement and information disclosure techniques is a continuous process, to ensure on-going consultation and engagement between the Company, the communities, Government, NGOs and the media. The most important consideration in developing stakeholder messages is to determine who the message is for and what the expected stakeholder reaction is. Each message should be targeted as specifically as possible and understanding the target group, their socio-cultural environment including their experiences, concerns and issues is important to determine the content and language of the message.

Throughout the project, a great deal of experience, research and information about the affected communities, their level of comprehension of the project and the social and cultural structures which govern behaviour and access to information have been gathered, and used to structure the communication techniques and develop appropriate messages as well as redefine and adjust the Company's corporate social responsibility activities (Weeks *et al.*, 2009).

The public consultation techniques and activities have been used to effectively communicate with, and inform stakeholders of, project developments and conveyed a set of corresponding messages using different techniques, some of which are discussed below.

5.1.1 Village Open Houses

An 'open house' is a public consultation tool aimed at facilitating information sharing opportunities. The key outcome of an open house is the gathering of ideas and feedback from participants.

The Company's village open houses (held in 2007 and 2008) involved groups of Company employees, sustainable development coordinators, engineers, specialists and members of the community liaison team travelling through the villages (along the pipeline route and in the vicinity of the Balhaf Plant) to meet with the communities (mainly adult men and women) to present and consult with them on the project developments and Sustainable Development Strategy, to gather suggestions and information and to provide them with opportunities to ask questions and receive feedback. A significant feature of the village open houses was the use of informative posters which were used to convey key messages on construction and operations of the project and to aid understanding. These were left with the village communities to create a lasting message to which they could refer subsequent to the actual event. The key messages that were conveyed with these 'written' documents focused on explaining about the Company and the overall project; project components (plant, LNG carriers, security, pipeline, safety); recruitment and Yemenisation; community relations and the grievance procedure, sustainable community development, environmental management and cultural heritage.

In 2008, an open house preparation meeting was also held prior to the actual village visits. This meeting was well-attended by representatives from most of the villages in the project area, and Governorate and district representatives. This meeting was beneficial in that it provided the village community representatives with information on what was planned for the open houses so that our team was well received. The open houses were gender sensitive as meetings with men and women had to be held separately.

5.1.2 High Level Open Houses and Press Conferences

Public meetings are a common and potentially efficient way to inform those affected by a project about the results of the ESIA and to solicit comments on it. High level open houses and press conferences were held in 2006, 2007 and 2008 and involved inviting and engaging with high-level stakeholder groups in a discussion and presentation format. The first objective of the Sana'a open house was to share the same key messages which were communicated in the village open houses (section 5.1.1) and present updated project information highlighting progress and achievements to stakeholders and interested parties. The second objective of such an event was to encourage discussion on project issues and record the feedback and ideas expressed by participants, which included senior Government officials from project affected areas, the international community, national and local authorities, the media and NGO's which share the development objectives for the benefit of communities in the vicinity of project operations.

5.1.3 School Awareness Programmes

As part of the Company's commitment to engage local stakeholders, the Company launched the School Awareness Programme (held in 2007 and 2008). The awareness programme formed part of a broader education strategy which is aimed at communicating important project information (section 5.1.1) to the younger generations in the project area by using developmental theatre, performing arts and educational activities to enhance the 'traditional' community engagement. By targeting school-going students as the primary audience for the fulfillment of the Programme objectives, messages would automatically be relayed to and received by a broader audience, including women and other marginalized groups.

The entire programme was designed to be culturally relevant and to respect local traditions and customs. The Programme was gender specific and consisted of separate male and female performing artists. The performances were also contextualised within an authentic local context which allowed students to identify with characters and the way they respond to the project and its impacts on their daily lives.

The programme consisted of a group of actors traveling through the villages in the project area (along the pipeline right of way and in the vicinity of the Balhaf Plant) to deliver important information about Yemen LNG, the project and the pipeline construction and operational activities in a fun and engaging way. The performance shared the same key messages as those conveyed in the open houses, and the cast included well known Yemeni actors, thereby helping to enhance communication between the Company and its young neighbouring communities. This method of communication was found to be the best considering the literacy levels in the villages, and proved to be an entertaining and engaging means to deliver the key messages. Following each performance, the performing group and school children engaged in activities to reinforce key messages and give children a positive learning experience to test their understanding of the messages delivered.

The open houses and school awareness program proved to be effective means of public communication and awareness creation, as both public participation activities provided opportunities to share detailed information with the community and

they have led to an overall improved relationship between the Company and its stakeholders (Weeks *et al.*, 2009). The Company team and the communities benefited from this positive and progressive information sharing experience and the building of mutual trust and positive relationships. Both activities were successful in communicating the Company's involvement in livelihood enhancement and sustainable development. A positive response was received during the open houses and most schools expressed a view that such awareness programmes should be an ongoing event as the activities were informative as well as stimulating and educational.

5.1.4 Community Liaison Team

To ensure continuous field-based communication, a dedicated community liaison team has been established to network throughout the Project area in order to distribute project information, inform communities of upcoming consultation events and gather information from the communities regarding the implementation of Sustainable Development projects.

In order to facilitate consultation and disclosure of information to project affected people, and to assist with household level survey work, the Company has encouraged and facilitated all project affected communities in establishing Village Consultation Committees which are headed by community leaders or elected representatives. The Village Consultative Committees act as a valuable interface for YLNG with these communities, particularly those in more remote regions and those without easy access to project information at the plant, camps or on access roads.

The community liaison team proved to be the best source of local information and were crucial in forming relationships with the local community and elected village committees, thus an essential tool in the public consultation and Sustainable Development process and were indispensable in forming mutually beneficial relationships with the local community and elected village committees.

5.1.5 Grievance Mechanism

A grievance mechanism to address affected communities' concerns and complaints is an important pillar of the stakeholder engagement process, since it creates opportunities for the Company and communities to identify problems and discover solutions together (IFC, 2009:i).

The Company has compiled a grievance mechanism to allow community members to have their issues and/or grievances recognised, registered, recorded and addressed. A specific operations based grievance/issues management process is currently being established for the beginning of the operations phase to acknowledge a different project phase which has a different set of variables to which project affected people will be exposed.

5.1.6 Focus Group Meetings and Needs Assessments

In addition to the advantages for the project, public consultation may provide project sponsors with significant opportunities to benefit people living in the proposed project area(s). Consultation can help make corporate investments more effective by identifying communities' priority needs and designing locally appropriate responses. Greater interaction with their communities may increase local employees' commitment and morale. The goodwill generated by the project may help build local support, which can be valuable to the project sponsor if unanticipated problems occur (IFC, 1998:16)

Under the Master Lease Agreement (the legal agreement by which land for the project use is leased from the Government) responsibility for consultation with landowners lies with the Yemeni Government, who will compensate accordingly for any land acquisition required by the Company for the project construction. Project Affected People at Balhaf and in identified communities along the ROW have been consulted since August 2005 as part of community survey work undertaken by the project CLOs, and consultants and during more recent household survey work as part of the Project RAP. In addition to gathering data on economic activities, land use and livelihoods, communities were informed in a timely manner about the planned project construction activities, the proposed location of the plant and construction camps and their concerns were noted in terms of the likely impact of these activities on their livelihoods.

In addition, members of the Government's Land Compensation Committee visited the ROW on two separate field trips to discuss compensation and the related process with the individuals and households. They also discussed at length the fact that compensation was not able to be awarded before construction activities commenced, although this issue is beyond the scope of this paper. Various agreements were made with affected individuals and households regarding this issue.

In terms of the Company's sustainable community investment programs, the Company continuously involves communities and government in designing projects and making decisions about how community development funds are used. Focus group meetings and needs assessments are undertaken to ensure that the beneficiaries feel a sense of ownership in projects and recognize that their contributions will influence both the decision-making process and the outcome of the project.

5.1.7 Written Materials

Written information was often used to supplement the key messages delivered utilising the stakeholder engagement and information disclosure methods discussed above. All documents were produced in Arabic and English and illustrated with photographs and drawings. Most written information is hand delivered directly to the affected population by the community liaison field staff.

Project Information Documents and Community Newsletters

In 2007 the first Company Project Information Document (PID) was produced for distribution among project affected communities and other interested parties. This brochure provided detailed project information on the proposed project and explained potential impacts, using maps and images of the plant and pipeline route.

In 2008 a new mechanism for sharing accurate, regular and timely project information was developed - the Community Newsletter. The newsletter provides project information in a more timely fashion than the annual visits undertaken to project affected communities (described above). The newsletter contains relevant project information and numerous pictures and descriptions of project activities which focus on the interests communities within the project area have identified. The newsletter is produced three to four times a year and distributed by field staff and copies are available from the Balhaf Visitors Centre.

Schools Programme Material

A series of visually attractive worksheets was used to supplement the use of theatre in the Schools Programme as an awareness creation technique. The worksheets were designed to be captivating and participatory, while using the same messages as the theatre performances for creating awareness and sharing information.

Posters

A key method of presenting updated project information has been through the creation of project information posters addressing relevant project information. Posters have been prepared in 2007 (focusing on the impacts of construction) and 2008 (focusing on the transition to operations) and presented in villages along the Right of Way and around Balhaf. Posters have also been presented at high level stakeholder presentations, conferences, meetings and events. The production of such posters is important in sharing updated project information including: Environmental Management Activities, Sustainable Development Initiatives, Archaeological Activities, Health and Safety Messages, Project Progress including pipeline safety and maintenance and Operations Activities.

Awareness Material

As the project started to move into its operational phase, the environmental and social impacts predicted in the ESIA process have started to take effect. Project affected fishermen and communities in the coastal areas were informed of the impacts and mitigation measures of the gas flare during start-up of Train 1 and of the rules regarding the Marine Exclusion Zone (MEZ) and Marine Restricted Area (MRA). Information leaflets with photos and focused messages were designed, tested for understanding by community members, adapted and explained by the community liaison team at focus group meetings before it was distributed. Additionally, community liaison staff registered issues raised and answered questions community members asked during meetings in order to further inform awareness material on the gas flare when Train 2 is started up during 2010.

6 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Primary monitoring and evaluation responsibility for PCD objectives and activities rests with the Company and internal social specialists undertake and/or manage the relevant monitoring. The Company has also appointed an external specialist to conduct regular independent reviews which also includes other social aspects of the projects, for example the Sustainable Community Investment Programs and activities related to the Resettlement Action Plan.

As it is important that the Company adheres to the monitoring and evaluation commitments made in the PCDD Addendum, particularly with regard to the evaluation of PCD activities during operations, a monitoring and evaluation framework within a Management Information System (MIS) is planned for 2010.

6.1 Lessons Learned

Internal lessons learned workshops as part of the monitoring and evaluation are undertaken periodically with the Company's community liaison, sustainable development programs and other staff members to capture and discuss continuous improvement and, provide a background understanding and rationale for the planning and implementation of community relations and sustainable development programs. Lessons learned workshops also provide staff with an opportunity to provide important and specialist feedback to promote inclusivity.

Lessons learned from the Construction Phase include the following:

Written Information Distribution

- Working in a society without acceptable levels of literacy requires carefully developed mechanisms for accurate information sharing. This needs to be taken into consideration when providing feedback to the communities and when communicating key messages. Only 24% of the population in Yemen can be classified as living in urban areas. The remaining population live in settlements of less than 5,000 people.
- Low literacy levels are also linked to the general lack of feedback. Written language is not the most common method of communication in the project area; spoken language (in the absence of high literacy levels) is the primary form of sharing and obtaining information.

Consultation with Government

- The frequent turnover of the Shabwah local authority representatives has resulted in difficulties in building and maintaining relationships.
- Working in a 'tribal' environment, and ensuring that the correct hierarchies of people are consulted presented an ongoing challenge.

Grievance Procedure

- At the beginning of the grievance process, the community liaison team were not equipped with suitable material to keep a "field grievance register" to enable them to refer to all the registered grievances and they were not sufficiently aware of the importance of capturing information and details for problem solving.
- All grievances were sent to Sana'a and were dealt with from the head office, from where a field investigation was initiated. A shortage of informed and experienced staff resulted in a lengthy and fragmented process which resulted in protracted timeframes for acknowledging, registering and following up grievances.
- The early relationship between the project affected people and the Company was characterised by mistrust, delays and inaction stemming from a coordinated system being managed daily from Sana'a which translated into tensions within the community.

7 CONCLUSIONS

Public consultation and disclosure activities will continue to support this project through to the operations and decommissioning phases. The structure and functioning of the project's PCDP and PCDPA, as well as the lessons learned from monitoring during construction, can be viewed as a basis to aid the design and implementation other Public Consultation Plans

The communication methods, tools and techniques discussed are significant, as they provide excellent examples to other projects of effective communication techniques which, when adapted to the specific socio-cultural circumstances, can be appropriately used in any energy development project.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Figure 1 – Location of the Plant and Pipeline Route within Yemen

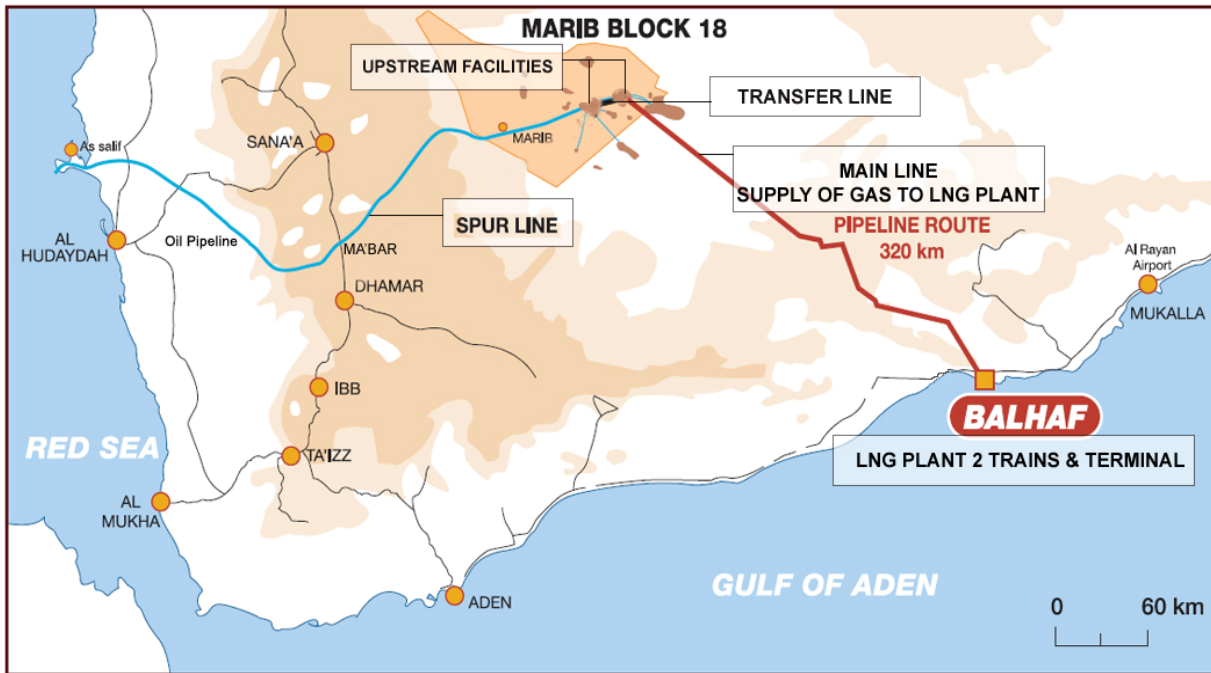


Figure 2 - IFC Consultation and WBG Disclosure Requirements

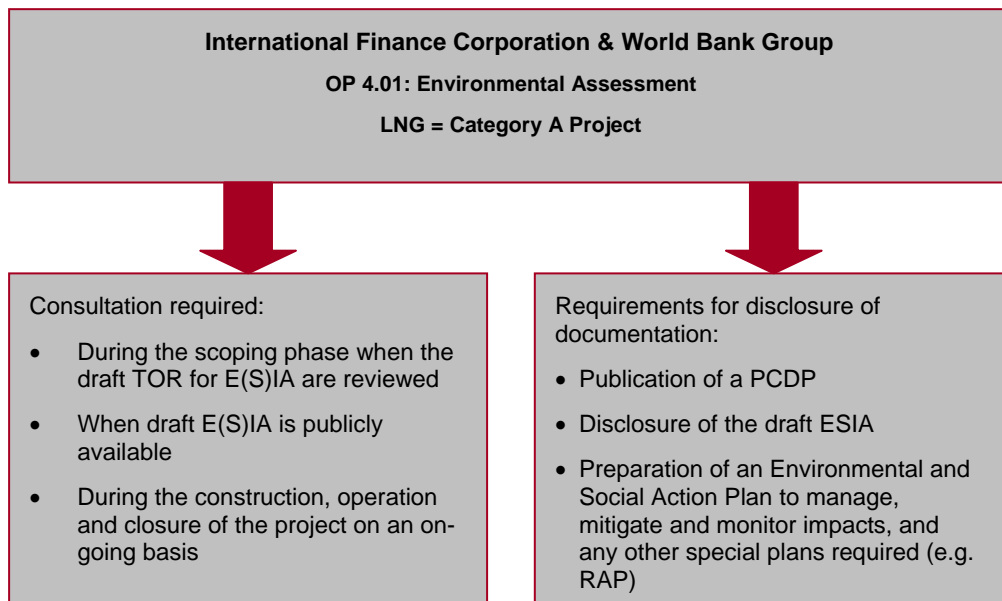


Figure 3: Linkages between the PCDP, ESIA, ESMP, RAP and SCDP

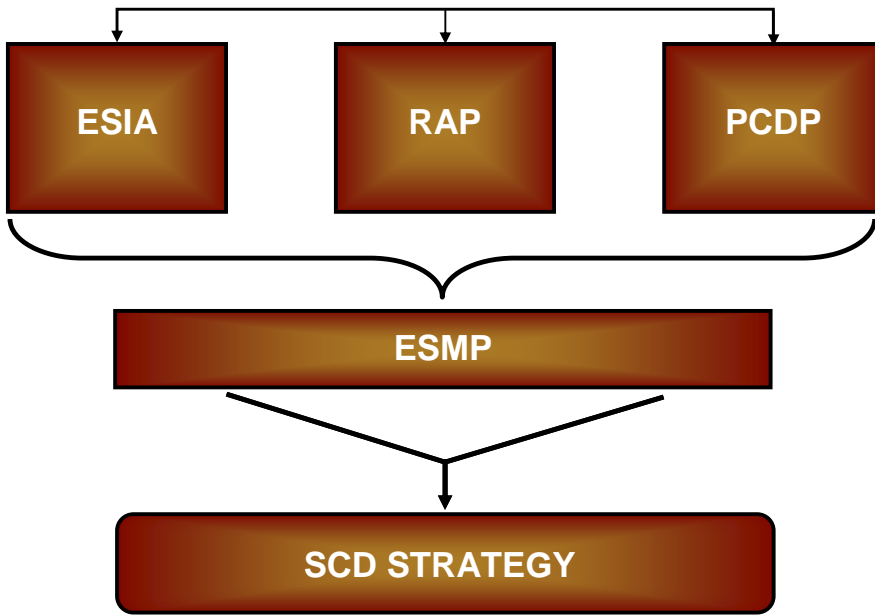


Figure 4: Community and Impact Zone Mapping

