

Thematic Area 2: Environment

Factors Influencing Public Participation in Environmental Impact Assessment of the Proposed RUI Sanitary Landfill Project in Nairobi City County, Kenya

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Abstract

Public participation is a key component in environmental impact assessment process. It is a process whereby concerns, needs and values of the public are incorporated in decision-making with the overall goal of ensuring that the issues raised by the public are incorporated in the project document before implementation. Environmental impact assessment (EIA) as a process seeks to ensure that adequate prior information on the likely environmental consequences of development projects, on possible alternatives and on measures to mitigate the adverse impacts are obtained from the public. EIA is therefore an important tool used to ensure significant adverse impacts of proposed major projects are addressed so as to promote sustainable development. This study helps in building resilient systems in economic systems especially in all development projects. The study responds to the realisation of the Kenya's Big Four Agenda which is an economic blue print meant to foster economic development and to provide solutions to various socio-economic problems facing Kenya. The study focused on a proposed infrastructure in Nairobi City. At the global level the study helps in the realisation of sustainable development goals (SDGs) 2030 goal number 11 on sustainable cities and communities. The study was motivated by the desire to come up with solutions that will mitigate the adverse impacts of development activities on the environment. The objective of the study was to examine key factors influencing public participation in the EIA process for the RUI sanitary landfill project in Nairobi City County. The study adopted a descriptive research methodology using a total sample of 120 respondents sampled in RUI area within the County. The key finding of the study is that despite high levels of public awareness about the proposed project, there was low knowledge on the need to participate and low levels of actual participation in the EIA process. The reasons for low participation were attributed to lack of time, lack of knowledge about the need for participation and lack of trust and transparency in the EIA process. The study recommends enhancement of public education about public participation in development projects. Project planners and implementers should observe transparency during the EIA process to ensure increased public trust, acceptability and support of development projects.

Keywords: Public Participation, Environmental Impact Assessment, Public Education, Transparency, Trust, Acceptability.