

Meeting Summary
NGO Forum on ADB and Office of the Special Project Facilitator
“The OSPF After One Year”
13.30-14.30, 30 March 2005

OSPF summarized the activities of the office during its first full year of operation, and distributed its just-published annual report. OSPF said that it takes effective communications seriously, and has prepared a number of brochures for information on the Consultation Phase. A simple English-language field guide has been developed and can be translated as the need arises. Reaching poor, project-affected people is seen as important. OSPF has held orientation sessions with operations departments, but does not advise those departments on individual projects.

NGO Forum identified seven concerns about the consultation process around the Southern Transport Development Project (STDP), the first project to go through all steps of the SPF consultation process. These concerns were detailed in a 4-^{1/2} page note provided to OSPF. In the note, NGO Forum recommends that OSPF should:

1. apprise complainants of an extended deadline for completing the Review and Assessment Report (RAR);
2. not be influenced by either ADB management or national procedures which are proceeding at the same time of the consultation phase;
3. disclose the RAR on ADB's web site;
4. play a proactive role to implement the RAR recommendation in Step 7 of the process (and assign the consultant – in the specific case of the STDP, a facilitator/mediator, to an auxiliary role in the consultation process);
5. require that the consultant's report -- again this referred to the specific case of STDP -- be submitted only with the parties' consent;
6. when employing a consultant/facilitator/mediator, make sure it is one who can stay in the country concerned during the contract term to oversee implementation of agreements; and
7. consult with complainants on termination of the consultation process.

OSPF took note of each of the points and responded to them. For example, OSPF said that it has the prerogative to make certain decisions, such as determining whether or not continuing the consultation phase would be purposeful. On Point 1 above, OSPF acknowledged that a discussion with complainants on the time frame of a delay is advisable. On Point 2, OSPF said that it took into account the work of the committee set up by the Office of the Prime Minister, as well as the safeguards review carried out by ADB's South Asia Department, but in doing so its independence was not affected. Regarding Point 3, OSPF said that the Accountability Mechanism Policy (at Step 4) does not allow the RAR to be disclosed; NGO Forum said that the Policy does not state whether or not it should be disclosed, and that to be consistent with the treatment of the Mediator's report (which was disclosed), the RAR should be posted on ADB's web site.

OSPF highlighted the conflict-ridden, emotional environment around the project, which has been in dispute for many years. It was very difficult in such circumstances to get the concerned parties to the table. In light of the continuing impasse, OSPF believed that it could not proceed further with the consultation phase.

NGO Forum called for more mediation and problem-solving efforts from the OSPF, but also acknowledged that the SPF is not a panacea. Looking forward, NGO Forum argued for the need of “flow arrangements” by the time a project reached the OSPF. It also presented a list of 12 general recommendations for the OSPF. OSPF also distributed copies of the STDP Final Report to the complainants present in the meeting.

List of Attendees

NAME	ORGANIZATION
<p><u>NGO</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Simon, Michael 2. Shimizu, Noriko 3. Shrestha, Neeru 4. Siwakoti, Gopal Chintan 5. Withanage, Hemantha 6. Bhatt, Sanjai 7. Athukorala, Sarath 8. Singh, Prabin Man 9. Tanabe, Yuki 10. Lalani, Chandrika <p><u>ADB Staff</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Oswald, Karin 12. Edes, Bartlet 	<p>OXFAM FOE – Japan WAFED NGO Forum NEJ – Srilanka PAIRVI – Delhi, India U.S. P. A – Srilanka WAFED JACSES GSS - Srilanka</p> <p>OSPF RSDD (NGOC)</p>

Participants

ADB

Nalin Samarasingha, OSPF
Karin Oswald, OSPF
Bart Édes. NGOC

NGO Forum on ADB

Gopal Siwakoti "Chintan", WAFED, Nepal
Michael Simon, Oxfam/CAA Australia
Neeru Shrestha, WAFED
Prabin Man Singh, WAFED
Yuki Tanabe, JACSES
Sanjai Bhatt, PAIRVI, India
Hemantha Withanage, CEJ, Sri Lanka
Noriko Shimizu, Friends of the Earth, Japan
Sarath Athukorale, Joint Organization of Affected Communities on Colombo-Matara Highway, Sri Lanka
Chandrika Lalani, Joint Organization of Affected Communities on Colombo-Matara Highway, Sri Lanka