

ALBANIA

Albania is rich in mineral resources as well as with primary aggregates evaluated as unlimited reserves. During the fifty years period until 1990, the use of aggregates has been limited and realized by a centralized planning governed by rules of centralized economy. In the last two decades when Albania faced the free market economy rules, at the beginning mining industry almost gone in collapse and with the application of new mining strategies and legislation in 1994, which enabled the transition from an economically centralized type of ownership, planning and operation, into one based on the free market the mining industry begun to play an effective role in improvement of the quality of life and on the sustainable economic growth of the country. Albania already has a mining strategy and a new package of mining legislation. Even that in the existing mining strategy the aggregates part takes big attention because the production of primary aggregates today occupy 83 % of the total mining products. On the consultation (Fig. 1) realised under the SNAP-SEE project between all stakeholders, the design of a new specific strategy in Albania, by taking into account all its elements as an integrated part, is revealed with a great importance.



Fig. 1. The first SNAP-SEE stakeholders consultation in Albania took place in June 2013.

From this consultation came out the idea that it is time **for a new sectorial strategy for the aggregates**, which shall pass the difficulties of its division in two legislations and its management from three institutions. Such division creates difficulties in planning process; in the management from central state and local institutions, use of aggregates from the business and, it is time to harmonize, and improve aggregate planning policies, by greater policy coordination within and among central and local state institutions, followed by consultation and debate with all the stakeholders.

Consultation process realized under the SNAP-SEE project was the first step in beginning the debate forum for planning process of aggregates and a part of the several topics related to planning, exploitations rehabilitation of quarries, improvement on Albanian legislation, investments on mining sector and environments, mining legislation and policies, needs for a cooperation among ministries and relevant institutions on permitting, monitoring and control etc., there are emphasized in this consultation also the following topics:

- ✚ To set up a multi sectorial and inter institutional working group which should work on elaboration of a platform for aggregate planning. It is needed major participation of NGO-s, Universities, Researcher and local experts in planning processes; Harmonization of laws, for cleaning the overlapping of jurisdiction within central state institution and between central and local state institutions;
- ✚ Creating an investment environment with appropriate international standards by fighting corruption, increasing transparency and better informing about the impact of exploitation of mineral resources to the environment, to facilitate the availability of information;
- ✚ Encourage the establishment of domestic association of operators in the aggregate business;
- ✚ Determination of the proper criteria during planning process such as: Geographical, Geological, Environmental, Organizing, Social and economic development, etc.;

- ✚ Strengthened of the institution to correctly applying the law, (supervision, monitoring, illegal quarrying) and imposing the law to the producers to provide accurate data on aggregate production, environments rehabilitation, etc., during the elaboration or annual reports;
- ✚ The “Know-How” and experience exchange between local operators and other companies dealing with aggregates should be stimulated;
- ✚ Progressively environmental rehabilitation of operating quarries to be carry out with aim to decrease some major environmental damages caused from quarries such erosion, floods, land loss, peisage etc. and by not leaving it to the end of quarry operation;
- ✚ A Reassessment of aggregate resources based in international standards is a must for a good planning; Gathering of all data for aggregate use in all activities within the country and at the cross border areas;
- ✚ Exploitation of the riverbeds gravel only for rehabilitation purposes.

Results of the first open debate and its continuity during these months with different groups of interest, topics raised during discussion, ideas for performing a wider participating process in the planning of aggregates reveals once more the importance of such consultation and at the same time ensuring that a plan done with all the stakeholders has more chances to be successful than any other plan done just only from the authorities which approves such plan.

The **second national consultation** (Fig. 2) meeting was held on June 26, 2014 in the premises of the Geological Survey of Albania in Tirana. 32 participants reached on this event to discuss on aggregate planning and to follow the conclusions of the first event held a year ago. The participants were representatives of the Ministry of Energy and Industry, the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration, National Agency of Natural Resources, Ministry of Infrastructure, ALB EITI -Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, Polytechnic University of Tirana, Faculty of Geology and Mines, Agriculture University of Tirana, AIDA Albanian Investment Development Agency, NGOs, Experts, etc.

Conclusions of this event were:

1. To propose to the government the need for setting up a multi sectorial and inter institutional working group for the preparation of the aggregate strategy based on the results of this project and SARM-a project as well as in the best practice from the European countries. The group shall include all stakeholders and representatives of interested groups. On the working group shall be invited also representative form industry, civil society, researcher institute and local experts.
2. Mining Institution Geological Albania Survey and National Agency of Natural Resources guide from the Ministry of Energy and Industry shall prepare a study to reassess the existing aggregates deposits, re-evaluate their reserves with the new standards, evaluation of the needs based on national strategy and sectorial strategies for big energetic and infrastructure objects, the needs of the small private market, as well as the environment and social issues.
3. Water Management Committee shall support mining institution and cooperate with them for preparation of the study for the aggregate potential supplying with the data for the exploitation of the aggregate from the riverbeds.
4. The Multi Stake holder group composed from the relevant ministries related to the aggregates, with the participation of all interested groups shall prepare based on the results of this study a draft for the aggregate strategy and the draft sustainable planning of the aggregates, which shall be presented to the public for discussion before its approval.
5. The team of the project shall prepare a preliminary draft on both aggregate strategy and development plan for the aggregates to be presented to the multi stakeholder group.



Fig. 2. The 2nd SNAP-SEE consultation in Albania was held on June 26, 2014.