

International Conference on The Siting of Locally Unwanted Facilities: Challenges and Issues

13 December 2007

Round Table Discussion - Gist of Discussion

Theme: Guidelines for Future LULU Siting – Policy Objectives, Procedures and Instruments

Group 1

Key issues discussed in Group 1 are summarized below including:

1. Values and goals

- Fairness of the siting process and outcome
- Technically sound facilities and adequate measures
- Environmental and social acceptability
- Full consideration of externality
- Effective public participation
- etc.

2. Identification of stakeholders

- Locals (the nearby residents)
- The whole Hong Kong community
- Government as representation of the locals
- Legislators
- District Councilors
- NGOs
- Users of those facilities

Stakeholders do have different values and agenda on the siting of LULUs.

3. Multi-stakeholder process

- Early and multi-stage/ continuous consultation with different stakeholders
- High transparency throughout the process (getting relevant information like advantages, disadvantages and choices)
- Consideration of options including the status quo
- Consensus building

4. Solution/ Conflict Resolution

- Compensation, benefit sharing, betterment?
- Voting? Referendum?

Group 2

Key issues discussed in Group 2 are summarized below:

1. Building a government that people trust
2. Engagement of multi-stakeholders in decision making & benefit sharing

3. A structured process for public engagement from LULU conception through site selection to decision
4. Building up social trust among vendors of NIMBY facilities, community residents and government officials
5. Value-balanced evaluation of economic and non-economic values of projects
6. Developing compensation approach (guideline) supporting the community for siting of LULUs
7. Developing scientific approaches to identify and define the affected group
8. Democratising the decision process and improving consultation to make it relevant in the decision making process
9. Changing from DAD (decide-announce-defend) mode to a procedure that involve public participation (from the initial stage)
10. Any betterment measures or share of benefit should not be seen as compensation or means to buy people out
11. When decisions on public administration (including the siting of LULUs) become more transparent in a society, it necessitates the establishment of more effective rules (e.g., policy, institutional mechanism and where necessary legislation) on “compensation” to get go with LULU decision/ project.
12. Adopting a bottom-up approach with early consultation and adequate information (economic, environmental and social costs and benefits) for the public.
13. Establishing by Hong Kong and adjacent cities/ provinces a higher cross-boundary siting authority to oversee LULU establishment

Group 3

Key issues discussed in Group 3 are summarized below:

1. Government has not done enough – e.g., no policy on compensation/ betterment; no policy on what facilities we need
2. HK EIA does not include social impact assessment system and social impacts may be ignored or unattended
3. The public have no way to voice their objection and would go for judicial review
4. Planning process does not involve the public in the early stage
5. Institutional setting creates the siting problems and thus important to solve the institutional problems or hurdles in the siting process
6. Formalised procedures/ measures (one-stop) e.g., compensation, comprehensive assessment including environmental, social and economic assessments
7. Set goals for trust building, public participation, NGO involvement, etc.

Conclusions

Participants discussed guidelines for future LULU siting, integrating the discussion of the three groups, focusing on the setting of clear policy objectives, wide and effective multi-stakeholders process and the implementation of policy instruments.

Firstly, through setting clear policy objectives, the following can be achieved:

- the need and benefits of LULUs be established in the society
- comprehensive assessment that takes care of the environmental, social and economic concerns of the society regarding the siting of LULUs be undertaken
- rules for compensation or betterment would become clear and institutionalized
- fairness of the siting process and outcome be ensured
- successful public participation programme be implemented

Secondly, the guidelines for multi-stakeholder process should include the following elements:

- Bottom-up approach
- Identification of key stakeholders
- Early and multi-stage/ continuous consultation
- Consideration of options throughout the process
- Transparent process and adequate information to the public
- Social trust building in the process
- Evaluation of environmental, social and economic advantages and disadvantages of the LULU/ project
- Consensus building
- Involvement of the public in decision making

Thirdly, policy instruments are needed to compensate the hosting community affected by the siting of LULUs. The policy instruments may be non-monetary compensation, benefit sharing of any acceptable forms, betterment and so on.

The above guidelines emerging from the captioned Conference need to be carefully studied in Hong Kong to improve their effectiveness, acceptability and practicality