

CASE STUDY - GENDER IMPACTS OF NENSKRA HYDRO POWER PLANT

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Striving for environmental and social justice in Georgia

Introduction - The Gender Impact of Large Hydro

The World Commission of Dam (WCD) reveals that construction of reservoirs and associated infrastructure may impact woman and man disproportionately. “Given the gender-blindness of the planning process, large dam projects typically build on the imbalance in existing gender relations. For affected communities dams have widened gender disparities either by imposing a disproportionate share of social costs on women or through an inequitable allocation of the benefits generated”¹. The wider impacts may include the domestic violence and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV and AIDS, problems during the land compensation when the planning is poor and gender-blind. Gender and power imbalance leads towards higher marginalisation of women and traditional land ownership. Government plans construction of more than 114 hydro including the large dams that may lead towards involuntary resettlement increasing the gender risks, inequality between men and women, risks related to safety and etc. which is already present in Georgia.

The present case study is based on desktop research, numerous trips to affected communities, and meetings with different decision makers in Georgia and internationally, as well as the findings of fact finding mission implemented by CEE Bankwatch Network and Green Alternative to study social and gender impacts of forthcoming construction.

The aim of the study is to reveal the potential gender impacts of Nenskra Hydro construction and to provide recommendations to Georgian Government and International Financial Institutions how to address the existing gender gaps in hydro projects planning and make it part of the decision making processes.

Project background

The Nenskra Hydro power plant is one of the 35 hydropower plants stated for development in Upper Svaneti (Georgia) started to be constructed since 2016. Svaneti is region in high mountains of Western Georgia. Preserved by its long isolation, the Upper Svaneti region of the Caucasus is an exceptional example of mountain scenery with medieval-type villages and tower-houses, where people still continue to live based on mixture of ancient traditions and Christianity. The Svans, an ethnographic group of the Georgian people, are a race apart: the pace of life is different there, they have their own language and traditions, their own architectural styles, and for them ancient customs is still very much a part of everyday life². Their traditional lifestyle a unique: daily they speak the Svan language (from the Georgian Language group), the ancient customs still continue as an important part of everyday life; this includes a mixture of paganism and Christianity, feud and hospitality.

¹ WCD 2000, p. 114

² Archaeological, toponymic and linguistic evidence indicate that the ancestors of the Georgian people have inhabited the west-central part of the southern Caucasus region for at least 5,000 years and probably much longer. In the third millennium B.C. one group of Kartvelians migrated to the northwest, reaching the east coast of the Black Sea. Placenames believed to be of Svanetic origin are found in this area. Somewhat later, these ancestors of the Svans moved upland into what is now Svaneti. Axes and other artifacts—as well as the ruins of foundries for the production of bronze and iron—dating to the early Bronze Era have been discovered in Svaneti. This indicates that the local population was engaged in metalworking in the second and first millennia B.C. The Greek geographer Strabo (end of the first century B.C.) describes the Svans as a fierce, warlike mountain people, ruled by a king and a council of 300 elders and capable of fielding an army of 200,000. (This figure may be an exaggeration, or perhaps Strabo was including other Kartvelians under the designation “Svan.”) Svans History and Cultural Relations, [http:// www.everyculture.com/Russia-Eurasia-China/Svans-History-and-Cultural-Relations.html](http://www.everyculture.com/Russia-Eurasia-China/Svans-History-and-Cultural-Relations.html)



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The 280 MW Nenskra hydro power plant project has been developed by the Georgian State Partnership Fund through advisory services of the IFC . The project is located on the Nenskra and Nakra river gorges. The Nenskra project includes the construction of a 135 metre rock fill dam on the Nenskra River, which would flood up to 400 ha of forests and communal lands. Additionally, a 13 metre dam and 12.4 kilometre diversion tunnel will be built to bring water from the Nakra to the Nenskra reservoir. The scheme will considerably reduce the environmental flow of the Nakra River, leaving just 10 per cent of average annual flow downstream regardless of seasonal fluctuations.

The project will be implemented state-owned Partnership Fund and K-water, the Korean State water company on the BOT scheme (Build-Operate-Transfer). As it has been the practice with other hydropower projects in Georgia, the Nenskra implementation agreement signed in August 2015 is confidential, so many details like land acquisition and tariffs are unknown. The total cost of the project is up to 1 billion USD. The project is supposed to be financed by the EBRD, ADB, EIB and Korean Development Bank. Italian industrial group Salini Impregilo has been selected to carry out construction and preparatory works.

In October 2015, the Georgian Ministry of Environment issued a positive ruling for the project based on an environmental and social impact assessment (ESIA) report that an external reviewer deemed „in need of substantial revision“. The EBRD, ADB and EIB performed a gap analysis of the ESIA against its requirements and commissioned supplementary studies for July 2016 (but they were not out at the moment of the writing of this report).

Svans rely on subsistence agriculture, animal grazing and forestry. The harsh living conditions and isolation have harnessed a strong sense of community cohesion and sociocultural integrity. The project is located in the high mountain valleys of the planned protected area, the Upper Svaneti National Park³. The project will have significant impacts - both on social and natural environments. It is estimated that project implementation will directly impact at least 400 households in Chuberi and Nakra communities, while indirectly impacting all Svaneti region inhabitants.

The population in Svan region claims they are being impacted by the consequences from the huge Enguri HPP constructed in late 80s by Soviet Government. Since that time Svans are opposing the construction of 702 MW Khudoni dam, that supposed to be located 20 kilometres downstream from the Nenskra dam and would forcibly resettle around 2000 Svans from local villages. The failure to recognize the cultural and property rights of Svans and properly identify the impacts of hydropower on their livelihoods has created fierce opposition to Khudoni⁴. Similarly, the poor quality assessment of the Nenskra project, together with the neglect of the opinion of locals, threatens to aggravate the fading public acceptance of Nenskra.

Since April 2016 there is ongoing series of rallies by affected community and upper Svaneti representatives in Svaneti and Tbilisi against the project. The Chuberi community even closed the road and asked government of Georgia and involved IFIs to stop financing of the Nenskra construction, until requirements of the people would not be satisfied.⁵ However, on May 20th, 2016 Police special forces were deployed to clear a blockade of an access road leading to the planned Nenskra dam site in Georgia's northwest. The confrontation between police and dozens of locals resulted in the detention of eight residents of the Chuberi community.

The Socio-Economic Situation in Svaneti and Woman workload

The socio-economic situation in Svaneti is difficult. According to the local Mestia municipality the upper Svaneti is inhabited by 10 000 people for 2014⁶. The major problems for the region is the bad road infrastructure, poor quality of healthcare, absence of proper transportation routes, lack of employment places for youth and etc. The migration from the region to large cities significantly increased recent years resulted from poor economic situation as well as some ecological disasters (avalanches, snowstorms and etc).

³ Upper Svaneti Protected Areas Management Plan. World Bank's Protected Areas Development Project. 2008;

⁴ Khudoni construction was first time stopped in 1989. Since 2005 Georgian Government efforts to revive the construction has been fiercely opposing by local communities. The resistance includes permanent strikes, public gatherings, work with political parties. At least 200 Svan families from different parts of Svaneti swear in a church that they will oppose and not allow the construction of Khudoni dam.

⁵ The demands include:

- The assessment of project alternatives that do not require flooding of the gorge are provided;
- Cost benefit analysis of the project for the country, region and the community is carried out;
- Independent review of the geological risks by independent experts, not commissioned by the company is conducted and information provided;
- Open public hearings of the project is arranged and all the interested stakeholders including independent experts, national and international NGOs are invited to attend it;

⁶ In 2012 it was 12 000 inhabitants

However, in Nakra and Chuberi communities, families have around 3-4 kids⁷. There are two schools and two kindergartens in Chuberi. Nakra has one school and one kindergarten, and Like in Chuberi, school needs reparation. Chuberi has ambulatory with 4 doctors. In case of emergency both communities depend on emergency services from Mesitia, which due to the poor road infrastructure takes at least 1.5 hours just to get to the place.

In both communities, schools are urgently need to be repaired. The level of education is quite high, as at least 90% of the students are usually accepted in Universities without additional expenses on extra teachers.

The women in Svaneti are mainly employed in public sector, like schools, kindergartens, medical facilities, municipalities and etc. There are few small shops run by woman up to the age 50. In Chuberi the woman is elected as representative of community and man in Nakra. However, in general, usually man getting preferences to get high income jobs also in public sector, while woman are mainly employed as teachers in schools and kindergartens and etc.

In terms of workload distribution, women responsibilities include the household work, care for the cattle and dairy cows, milk processing, work in the fields and gardens. They are primary responsible for taking care for the education of the children. While some agricultural activities like harvesting are done together, the man is busy with heavy physical work activities as forestry, scything, ploughing, and clearing the fields. The man is also taking the cattle on highland pastures during the summer. While in general, men are responsible for fuelwood, in families without man, all those work are done by women.

Both for Chuberi and Nakra the forestry has been main source of the income for years. However, since September 2015 there were ban on forest products export from Svaneti. As the region, has only one road that connects with other parts of Georgia, the police and environmental inspectorate are well controlling the exit. Majority of people attributing the ban on exporting of forestry products to governmental pressure to ensure agreement with Nenskra project from locals, that affects negatively women, as families are even more depending on subsistence farming that mainly lead by woman.

In terms of access to energy, Svaneti region receives free electricity as bonus of Enguri hydropower dam construction since late 70thies. In most of the households, except most poor ones, woman used the washing machines. While the electricity is free, distribution network is in very poor condition. It is maintenance by locals, rather than distribution company and in general shortcuts are high, especially in winter times. In addition, the electricity is not stable, that often creates problems for its use.

Both in Nakra and Chuberi communities, the fuelwood are used for cooking purpose both in summer and winters. As a result, even despite so called improved stoves, women and children that are mainly used to cook the food are most affected by indoor air pollution. The access to fuelwood varies from family to family. For most of them its easy, as they collecting the wood pieces brought by rivers or gather the fuelwood in their owned forests. However, the households without man, especially those who have forest lands far from villages, IDP (Internally Displaced People) have problems in accessing and collecting the fuel wood.

The burden of workload on woman is very high, especially when they are employed in public jobs, as additionally they also work hardly in home. However, majority of women seek and prefer the official employments, despite understanding that it will increase their workload.

Gender view of the project benefits for affected communities

It's generally recognized that the hydro construction would create the work places mainly for men, rather for women. In case of Nenskra Dam the workforce benefits are even scarce. The Project sponsor does not promise any additional benefits to the community except of the jobs. After strikes in April-May 2016 it promised verbally the improvement of water supply system and predicts tourism development in parallel of the hydro construction.

In communities, men have some expectations to be employed for physical works or as drivers. During the pre-construction works only few people have been employed. However, for women only available jobs are cooks and/or cleaners in working camps. There is no illusion among the community that this short term work opportunities for next few years will change the socio-economic situation drastically. According one of the women, "there may be some short term benefits in terms of increased incomes, employment or partially improved infrastructure, however, long-terms outcomes that includes impact on environment and health overrides those benefits".

⁷ In other high mountainous regions of Georgia the young families with kids is rather exception than usual situation

The women are concerned additionally with the problems of increased traffic on the roads and safety for children, as well as they start to fear problems what it would be if lots of the new people will enter community. They could not argue their fear based on the fact that ESIA document they saw does not address the issues of traffic and impact of worker's camp on community. However, they have concerns that introduction of massive workforce in the villages will change the life of the communities drastically.

Community land loss and Economic/physical resettlement

Nenskra project involves physical and economic resettlement of the affected communities. However, ESIA documentation does not contain neither Social Impact Assessment nor the Resettlement Action Plan that is the requirement of the ADB and EBRD.

The Nenskra reservoir will flood pastures and forests that the Svans have used for generations to earn their living. The villagers have yet to be informed about the fate of their customary lands. The implementation agreement with the company has not been publicly disclosed, and Georgian ministries are unclear about the ownership of the land, which was once owned by the state and then taken out of a forestry fund under the administration of previous President Saakashvili. While the developer promised to discuss land use with the villagers and the public consultations, no such topic has been raised.

It should be stressed that part of the lands that will be used by the project is under the traditional ownership of Chuberi and Nakra community representatives. Traditional ownership is not recognized by the Georgian government. The company claims that they will also reimburse for that traditionally owned lands, in accordance with ADB, EIB and EBRD standards⁸ the legal solution for compensation is unclear.

Some lands and houses are owned by women, but majority of land is under the men or extended families ownership. Locals used the lands both for agricultural purposes, as well as pastures and forestry. In number of cases, project sponsor starts pre-construction work (like widening roads) without prior negotiations with traditional owners, that caused high level tensions between local's and company. Some women stressed road reconstruction directly affects the places where they are growing the walnuts that represent the additional income for the families. They worry, that the loss of the traditionally owned lands due to the Nenskra hydro project will lead towards the major income loss as those lands used mainly for grazing and forestry, but also for some crops and potatoes. Women actively collect and sell non-timber products like nuts, berries and etc. also representing the significant income for their budget.

According to the project totally four households will be physically relocated for construction of the power house in Chuberi. Two of them will be resettled temporarily. The one of those houses to be resettled temporarily belongs to 91 old woman. She already received proposal for temporarily relocation and compensation for next five years. For her, this attitude is unbearable and she is against to be relocated. Situation is exaggerated by the fact that family and woman herself are IDPs⁹. She has been already forced to leave her house once and restart her life in Chuberi. Now, her family is forced to leave the house again.

In village Lakhmi the group of women are being concerned with the threat of physical resettlement they saw in the project. The project description lacks the transmission lines construction plans. As the power house will be in Lakhmi and gorge is very narrow, locals believe that Transmission lines construction will cause the involuntary resettlement of at least 50 families in Lakhmi village (Chuberi Community).

Worsening the livelihood conditions

Women in project affected area, also fear that in future they may be forced to resettle because of worsened livelihood conditions in the gorge, due to the health impacts and increased geological risks.

The fear is based on the ESIA document, claiming that the Hydro "Its impact on climate will be essential in spring, when the whole ice cover will start melting-breaking and in the late autumn, before the ice events will start. The significant difference between water and air temperature in these periods and strong wind will activate evaporation. Evaporated moisture in form of snow-ice will lie on buildings, fruit trees and will damage them. The damage caused by early freezes is heavier, because the freezes cause the death of buds and sprouts, due to which the useful plants start premature aging,

⁸ International financial Institutions, as World Bank, Asian Development Bank. European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Investment Bank recognize the customary rights to the land ownership, including traditional collective land tenure, as well as the rights of Indigenous people. Each International Financial Institution has Safeguard policies that address this issue.

⁹ After 1991-1994 ethnic conflict in Abkhazia, around 300 000 people of Georgian ethnic nationalities been forced to leave the Abkhazia to other parts of Georgia.

infertility and death. The population living in the vicinity of the reservoir will get a heavy living conditions, who are sick with rheumatism or/and respiratory and require vascular system treatment.”

That is very problematic issue for the local communities, especially for women. Most of them have been started the conversation with the admission, that if the hydro will be constructed the changed micro-climate will push them to resettled due to the health and other hazardous impacts of the project. Number of women, including doctors in Chuberi, stressed that the Enguri dam already increased humidity in the gorge and people experience more diseases related to increased humidity than it was before. Therefore women fear that the project through the worsening of climatic conditions, will force them eventually to leave the gorge¹⁰.

In both villages, there were high concerns regarding the increased humidity's in their respective gorges, claiming that except of the problems related with health they also concerned with potential of increased avalanches, landslides and floods in the gorges based on their experience. Women in the villages, also attributed the worsening climatic conditions, with increased snowstorms and avalanches that have large impacts on communities lives. E.g. In 1976 and 1987 there were snowstorms in Chuberi destroying the part of the village. The people who survived but stayed without houses were resettled in Dmanisi, Kvemo kartli.¹¹

According to the studies last year two families have been forced to relocate in Chuberi due to the avalanche and 30 houses have been flooded in Nakra. In same Nakra, one of the families visited the house was almost destroyed last year by avalanche. The housewife directly applies the increased frequency of avalanches with the increased humidity. She also highlights that high humidity inside the house led the walls area to be covered by mold that treats health of the children.

The number of women , as well as men in Nakra expressed their concerns regarding the diverting of river Nakra and leaving only 10% of the water in river bed. According to them, it may lead to situation that one day Nakra would be not able to wash out the sediments brought by mudflow river Lekverari that would cause the major landslide and burry the village underneath. They also express the concern with the fact that another even larger mudflow river Leknashera, on the north of the village, has been completely neglected in the EIA report. Itself the fact, casts doubt of locals on the reliability of geodynamic processes and risks assessment. Locals stated that both rivers are active and almost every year they bring a great amount of debris. For the last time, in 2010, the Leknashera River completely covered the cemetery and agricultural plots in the village, while in 2001 the Lekverari River washed away a plot of land owned by a local resident as well as a tractor.

Nenskra hydro public participation process from woman's point of view

In Svaneti, the traditional custody laws are still in use. It includes Elders Council and Popular Assembly, as well as Svan Court Morvali representing the early form of Jury and Mediator Courts. The research revealed that women actively participated in formal community meetings organized under local authority's auspices, as well as in traditional governing bodies like elderly councils, popular assemblies and Lalkhor.

The women in Svaneti are very active in discussing their problems in popular assembles and pushing for their interests. E.g. women stress that they are pushy for the decisions like reconstruction of school or construction of new kindergarten during community budget hearings. They stressed that women in communities have no problem of expression of their views and opinions during the gatherings. Women they actively participated in traditional dispute resolutions in forms of Jury and mediation, as well as in the decision-making process regarding the oaths on the icon (despite the fact that only men are allowed to swear on icon).

However, majority of women interviewed by FFM mission in June 2016 express their dissatisfaction regarding the public participation process of the Nenskra project and possibilities for women's voices to be heard.

The process has been characterized by numerous flows. The major complaint addresses the issue that government decided to construct the hydro and only after that there were public consultations, when decision has been already taken. According to locals, since the protest movement against dam develops in Chuberi and Nakra in spring 2016, the public meetings starts to be held more often.

The number of women claim that while they have possibility to express themselves in the public meetings, their views have not been taken into account and answers to their questions have not been given, therefore they consider it rather waste of time. E.g. the doctor in Chuberi, stated, “why I should gone in last public meeting, what would be the reason.

¹⁰ Review of Nenskra HEP ESIA Study. By Prof. Dr. Frank Schrader. For the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Georgia. 13 May 2015.

¹¹ Another region of Georgia.

They don't take into account anybody's comments and proposals, while could not answer on concrete questions regarding the risks raised by us". Mainly, during the public meetings the company promotes the benefits of the project – employment opportunities while ignore answer over the risks.

One of the Nakra villager, woman, describes those public meetings as meaningless. She also admitted, that last public meetings less and less women attended the meetings, because "there is no agenda of the meetings. We are asking questions and there is no adequate response that would watered our concerns. Even more, last few meetings was everything but not a meetings. First there was some project supporters gathering, when project opponents saw the gathering they also came. As there is no agenda and no real communication, the project opposers and supporters are starting to shouting to each other and there is quarrel. As you know women have lots of the things to do, so we don't see any sense to participate in the meetings and just look how men are shouting to each other. "On the question, how the meetings are facilitated from companies side she said, "there is no independent facilitator, its always our municipality representative and some Georgian employee from the investor side leading the meetings, and try to say that everything will be ok. Few times, we also saw some Korean investors on the meetings. However, we got the impression that they don't understand what is going and even have no interpreters with them".

Another woman from Chuberi echoing, "when I find out that there is meeting planned I'm always going there and often see the bizarre situations. Often I'm filming the meetings and meeting organizers and police tries to stop me, claiming that filming of public meeting is illegal".

Therefore, while the women have possibility to attend and express their views during the public hearings, they don't consider those meetings as part of the real decision-making process. They also not consider the public participation process free from governmental pressure. Women from Chuberi underlined, while there is no police post in a village, when there are meetings or protest actions, suddenly lots of the police appears. In addition, few women get blackmailed by police, that if they would not stop protest activities, the police will plant drugs and they will be arrested.

Women from Nakra echoing, that while there was no direct pressure from governmental or police forces, few times when they have been asking something for community, in response there was answer stop protesting and community will get that. Women claim, that direct promotion of the project from local authorities increase the pressure on locals.

Gender Impacts Assessment in Environmental and Social Impact Assessment approved by Georgian Government

The Dam's commission recommends to carry out a gender assessment that would be helped to avoid, minimize, mitigate and compensate negative impacts, while promoting the women's empowerment and participation, and increasing the equitable access to and control over benefits in order to ensure high quality.

The World Dam's Commission recommends that project developer should ensure:

- Data collection (that includes baseline data - Sex disaggregated data and socio-economic status of affected communities Understanding the context, including Socio-economic status (poverty assessment/ human rights assessment);
- Dam affected communities context analysis identification of risks and understanding of women needs - Analyse the factors that influence the gender differences, divisions of labour, etc. and making recommendations and preparing gender strategy).

From the Gender Assessment perspective the Nenskra HPP ESIA is a perfect example of poor and gender blind planned project. The ESIA submitted to the Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection, failed both to present the Svan profile, as well as lacks the both social and gender assessment¹². ESIA does not contain any social assessment, to address social impacts on communities.

The ESIA focused on so-called positive factors (improvement of infrastructure and employment) rather addressing issues of loss of lands and potential for physical and/or economic displacement, as well as problems with microclimate change and the potential impact on population. It also fails to assess the impacts of the construction phase and workers camp on community health.

¹² Nenskra JSC Project on the Construction and Operation of Nenskra HPP. Environmental and Social Impact Assessment Report. By Gamma Consulting. 2015. p.394

The Social Impact Assessment of the project failed to address the issues like impacts of involuntary resettlement, changes and needs of livelihood restoration and etc. It does not address the impacts, that are significant for women, elderly and other vulnerable groups, like increased prices for food and other services, increased workload for women in traditional land use, collection of plant and timber resources, domestic violence etc.

ESIA approved by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia addresses only one para on Gender issues. (p.324). It claims “that traditionally women in the mountains have a quite strong role in community life and has more freedom. It stresses the fact that there are more women as the senior specialist in local authorities and the fact that from the few numbers of NGOs are chaired by the women. The EIA stresses that few small grants was devoted for popularisation of handicrafts and workshop. That women is also active in the business. After this very “comprehensive overview”, it adds, that despite of all above mentioned, there are family violence and woman discrimination, especially regarding to the land connected and real estate issues” (!).

The ESIA does not contain any gender disaggregate data, as well as analysis of gender relations, dynamics and inequalities in the project area even in the construction period. While the project plans to develop the two workers camps and bring in those two communities around 1000 people, it not mentions what type of impact it will have on communities.

Therefore, the ESIA fully misses the potential impact of workers camp on community health, and particularly, on woman and children. It’s widely recognized that introduction of outsider; mainly male workforce in closed communities may increase both the development of transactional sexual relationships that can influence social cohesion, increase risk of sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancies in young girls group. Especially, these are problems in Svaneti, as well as in Georgia, as the local social services and society are poorly equipped to deal with those kind of issues.

The large scale constructions always changes income balance of family that may raise the family violence, while the introduction of the workforce may also negatively impact on communities through increased harassment, trafficking, prostitution and sexual abuse. It has been experiencing in Georgia during the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline¹³. The prevention of those practices first of all needs the acknowledgement of those potential issues which we could not see neither in ESIA nor during the preparatory stage of the project¹⁴. It is important to establish culturally appropriate mechanisms that would prevent that practices. Again, this could not be done thoroughly without a full gender assessment.

As ESIA is missing an in-depth social and gender impact assessment, as well as assessment of Involuntary Resettlement therefore the proposed mitigation measures of potential significant impacts are also poor or almost none existing.

However, the Georgian legislation doesn’t regulate any impacts of social and gender issues, even connected with involuntary resettlement. From a legal stand point these issues do not represents the problems of the development projects.

The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection, while they issue the environmental permit on Environmental and Social Impact Assessment report, are obliged to check only environmental issues. The ministry claims, “regarding any information in ESIA related to economic issues, social issues and any other important issues, the detailed study of the reviewed issues falls out of the competence of the ministry, as it represents the sphere of influence for other ministries. Coming from that the ministry has no opportunity to discuss in detail above mentioned issues.”

However, none of the other ministries are involved in issuance of the environmental permit. The Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs are even not part of the permitting process. They also not submit any written opinion during the decision making process. The Ministry of Economy that provides construction permit also not consider any economic or social issues¹⁵. Therefore it’s clear that social and gender issues, as well as issues related to involuntary resettlement in development projects does not regulate at all and the social commitments undertaken by ESIA stays without state revision and follow up supervision from State side.

¹³ Boom Time Bloose - Big oil's gender impacts in Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Sakhalin, <http://bankwatch.org/publications/boom-time-blues-big-oils-gender-impacts-azerbaijan-georgia-and-sakhalin>

¹⁴ According to EIB, EBRD and ADB staff they request from project sponsor to prepare the additional studies for ESIA in order that it complies the policies of those above mentioned Institutions during 2016.

¹⁵ Even more, according to the same ministry of environment, regarding the issues of information “that presented in different chapters of ESIA “In order to verify or neglect presented information and or to diagnose how comprehensively and detailed is studied that or that issue, the alternative researches needs to be done and presented to the Ministry. After presentation of researches or argumentation ministry will get opportunity to discuss the correctness and reliability of data presented in EIA”.

Conclusions and recommendations

Analysis of project documentation, the independent media reports, together with the FFM surveys, discussions with local CSOs revealed that the Nenskra project represents the perfect example of gender blind project, where project sponsor – Korean K waters fails to identify the negative social and gender impacts over the community, in order to protect women from disproportionately bearing the negative impacts and to ensure that women and men benefit equally from the project.

Meanwhile the project has potential to severely impact both Svaneti's environment and local men and women, through undermining of the environmental basis of local subsistence and the economy, which provide basic food, considerable income and recreation. These impacts will contribute to economic losses; increase the concerns about nutrition and health, and geological risks in the area. Thus the Nenskra project has provoked numerous, appeals and protests and undermines the prospects for the sustainable development of Svaneti.

The Nenskra project should be considered, from the perspective of the growth of social conflicts accompanying the rushed expansion of large hydropower across Georgia¹⁶ that reveals that in order to achieve the sustainable development it is essential to engage in free and informed consultations with all stakeholders and provide the realistic assessments of the impacts of so called development projects on people's livelihood and rights.

Therefore it's important to ensure that before approving the Nenskra hydro project, the International Financial Institutions will:

- Organize inclusive and informed consultations with affected villages, ensure the free participation of local community representatives;
- carry out the robust environmental, social and gender impact assessment of the project and its alternatives;
- Carefully study all risks related to the project on local communities health and safety;
- Provide cost benefit analysis of the project for the country, region and communities of Nakra and Chuberi;

It should be stressed that Nenskra hydro project represents the one from 114 hydro projects planned by the Georgian government its clear that existing national safeguard framework does not address the social and gender impacts, as well as issues related to involuntary resettlement.

According to the World Commission on Dams, "Where dams achieve an improvement in living standards in impact areas, this can have a positive spillover effect on gender equity". However, that goal could not be achieved without thorough social and gender impact assessment that would define gender strategy and gender action plan for follow up implementation.

Therefore, it's important that the Government of Georgia incorporates in new draft law on environmental impact assessment¹⁷ defines the legal requirements for social and gender Impact assessment, principles and standards of involuntary resettlement and defines the responsible agencies for its further implementation. The legal requirements should base on recommendations provided by UN relevant committees¹⁸ and the best International practices¹⁹.

¹⁶ <http://bankwatch.org/sites/default/files/briefing-EBRD-GEhydro-protests-10May2016.pdf>

¹⁷ In accordance with EU-Georgia Association Agreement, the new law on Environmental Impact Assessment should be adopted by Parliament of Georgia not later of 1 september 2017. The law should comply with Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 amending Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment Text with EEA relevance

¹⁸ "Basic principles and guidelines on development based evictions and displacement" UN (http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Housing/Guidelines_en.pdf),

¹⁹ The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure, <http://www.fao.org/nr/tenure/voluntary-guidelines/en/>