

Mediation forum

Case Study: Enlargement of Vienna Airport

Country: Austria

Due date: February 18th, 2013

Background Information:

In order to discuss the different alternatives concerning the enlargement of Vienna Airport in a transparent way and to avoid public protest, a “Mediation Forum” was initiated by the operator at an early stage of the procedure. In the Mediation Forum, regional stakeholders could engage in discussions aimed at finding agreed and acceptable solutions. The results of the Mediation Process were enshrined in a contractual agreement between all of the involved parties.

Phase of decision making process

In 1998 the operator “Flughafen Wien AG” announced its plan to build a third runway at Vienna Airport in its “Masterplan 2015”. Knowing that the public would protest against it, the operator sought a way to realise the project by a transparent decision making process with involvement of the relevant stakeholders. Therefore the operator commissioned a Mediator who together with a preparation group of 12 people should find out, who are the relevant stakeholders and develop a concept for the public participation process. The work of the preparation group concluded in the decision to start a Mediation process.

Formal framework of decision making process

The enlargement of Vienna Airport requires a license and an EIA procedure, Mediation process ended in obliging agreements signed by the most of the parties of the Mediation forum. The public participation process was structured in 5 phases:

- 1) preparation phase in 2000,
- 2) start of Mediation process- contracting and
1. structuring January 2001 until April 2001
- 3) Identification of relevant topics (April 2001 till Feb 2002
- 4) developing basics for the decision making process, negotiation of contract concerning actual measures (“Teilvertrag”).
- 5) evaluation of “Teilvertrag” and negotiation of other relevant topics end 2005: signed contracts.

Objectives of the process

Objectives are:

- To find in a fair procedure, common agreed solutions which limits the impacts of the flight traffic for the affected public to an acceptable level,
- to work on and sign a Mediation contract in which the found solutions will be fixed in an legally binding way,

- to implement appropriate procedure and controlling instruments to assist and ensure the implementation of the agreed solutions.

Which tool was used?

In this case, the Forum consisted of more than 50 stakeholders. The results of the discussions were enshrined in either legally binding contracts or simpler signed agreements. For in depth discussion of specific topics, Working Groups consisting of delegates of the involved stakeholders were established, which fed their results in the Forum, which was responsible for preparing the final recommendations.

Status: completed

Objectives and outcomes of stakeholder engagement

Objectives are:

- To create transparency and chances for dialogue;
- To gain acceptance;
- Mediator was commissioned to find out who are the relevant stakeholders;
- To find in a fair procedure, common agreed solutions which limits the impacts of the flight traffic for the affected public to an acceptable level;
- To implement appropriate procedure and controlling instruments to assist and ensure the implementation of the agreed solutions;

Outcomes:

In 2003 a contract concerning the certain actual measures (“Teilvertrag”), in 2005 most parties of the mediation process signed a legally not binding common agreement summarizing the solutions plus several legally binding contracts. Most parties of accepted the outcomes. The outcomes will feed into the EIA procedure. No restriction in the alternatives was discussed.

Involved Stakeholders

selected by preparation group, in total 55 (including decision makers)

Implementer of the participation process details

Initiated by operator, “Flughafen Wien AG”, Decision for Mediation done in an preparation group, coordinated by Mediation team, funded 60% by “Flughafen Wien AG” and 20% by Governements Vienna and Niederösterreich

Financing

The Flughafen Wien AG (FWAG) took 60 % of the costs for the Mediation process and the States Vienna and Niederösterreich each took 20 %. The FWAG supported the operation of a website and the accompanying scientific evaluation.

Point to consider

Some parties did not sign the common agreement and contracts (reasons for not signing were mostly because those parties were not convinced about the necessarily of the third runway and the different opinions about the prohibition of flights at night), some citizens initiatives laid down their mandate during the process At the start of the mediation process no important decision had been

done so far, discussion was not limited to certain aspects but the process was open, decisions can only be done in the mediation forum in full agreement of all parties, the mediation forum agreed on a code of conduct There was a project steering group to coordinate the work and interaction between the Mediation forum and the working groups. Experts gave scientific support within the process.

Further tools used in this case study

Website, Press conferences, public meetings, Citizens Information Office, working teams working on different topics, from 2005 on Dialogue Forum to control the implementation of the outcomes of the mediation process.