



Case Study

Co-processing Waste Materials in Cement Production

Community Advisory Panels

The Example of Energis, Spain



BACKGROUND

In 2003, Holcim Spain opened the waste pre-treatment platform of its AFR subsidiary Energis in Albox, Andalusia.

Running a new industrial activity in town, local management recognized the value of stakeholder engagement and dialogue with the community, decided to establish a community advisory panel (CAP) from the beginning.

Holcim actively encourages all operational sites to engage with stakeholders and has developed guideline recommendations and a process model to assist local management in their engagement activities.

PROCESS

The objective of the CAP is to inform and involve all relevant stakeholders regarding plant operations, through active and direct dialogue. Stakeholders invited to join the group included the mayor of Albox, other local authorities, representatives of environmental and community groups, and Energis management.

The CAP sees its role as being an active company-community mediator. This extends to the development of an external coordination plan in the event of an accident, where CAP members have defined roles and follow public alert protocols.

ACTIVITIES

Management saw the need to open the plant's doors to the community, giving it an opportunity to see and hear first-hand about plant operations. On November 4, 2005, more than 100 guests toured the facilities. Of particular interest were areas of the plant where waste is collected and classified as well as the company laboratories where waste samples are analyzed prior to their acceptance.

STAKEHOLDER VOICES

As a representative of the center for environmental studies for the Almanzora River and a member of the NGO "Ecologistas en Accion", Martin Berbel Granados has also taken the role of secretary for the CAP in Albox.

"The Albox CAP is an important tool for 'greening' the town through educational projects," he said. "To ensure transparency, we will develop guidelines for its operation, a website disclosing its activities, and will invite a health expert to join."

GOOD PRACTICE

Holcim has an established program of sharing knowledge and multiplying good practices across its global operations. Experiences with AFR stakeholder engagement in other locations have informed the Albox CAP's priorities of safety and environmental performance.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Following more than a year of operations, an assessment was undertaken seeking the input of both plant employees and panel members. Results of the review indicated that the CAP's role was well perceived.

Yet there was potential for improvement, notably to differentiate the plant from its immediate neighbor, a landfill, as well as to communicate more about CAP activities and the value they have brought to the community.

There was also a request to focus corporate social responsibility activities on educational priorities, including environmental, waste and recycling issues.



Energis director of quality, Isidora Diaz, meets the CAP secretary (left). Martin Berbel Granados, believes the CAP is an important tool for 'greening' the town.

LESSONS LEARNT

Of highest priority to the community was assurance about plant safety as well as the AFR process itself. During 2004-2005, three accident simulations were undertaken, involving plant employees and local emergency services.

As a result, recommendations to improve the plant's emergency response were made, thus alleviating community concerns.

In a spirit of transparency, the CAP has promoted public access to all company documents relevant to safety and environment. These are available from the Town Hall and include impact assessments, emissions data, safety reports and hazardous waste declarations.

REFERENCES

www.coprocem.com

www.holcim.com/sustainable