Information System of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in Slovakia

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Abstract

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is considered to be one of the major instruments of the international environmental policy for implementing the sustainable development. In the Slovak republic the Environmental Impact Assessment has been carried out since year 1994 when the Act of the National Council of the Slovak republic No. 127/1994 Coll., on the Environmental Impact Assessment entered into force. On 1st December 2000 came into effect Act No. 391/2000 Coll., which changes and complements Act No. 127/1994 on the Environmental Impact Assessment. By approval of this Act, the absolute coincidence of legal regulations in the field of Environmental Impact Assessment in Slovak Republic with the legal regulations of EU has been achieved.

1. EIA Information System

The EIA information process is built according of the Act No. 261/1995 of the National Council of the Slovak republic about the state information system. The EIA information system provides full information about stage, course and results the EIA process and provides information about directly continuous activities.

The necessity to establish and operate the EIA information system came from the existing experience in the implementation of the Act No. 127/1994 of the National Council of the Slovak republic on the Environmental Impact Assessment and the Act No. 391/2000 Coll.

Within the Information system of environmental departments, the EIA Information System is solved as one of its nine subsystems. This subsystem relates to Ministry of Environment of the Slovak republic, to regional authorities - departments of environment (RA), to district authorities - departments of environment (DA) and to the Slovak Environmental Agency. This solution assumes automation of activities connected with the Environmental Impact Assessment process.

By the automation of this following subsystem should be achieved:

- Complex, more professional and more comfortable access to the information about state, flow and results of the Environmental Impact Assessment process
- Unification of the operation processes
- Essential enhancement of decision - making processes standpoints
- Giving on the basis of sufficient quantum of information
- Simplification of evidence and acceleration of document searching

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• Providing of information flows between the EIA process participants
• Enhancement of the whole EIA process in the sense of valid legislation

2. Technological solution

Informatics Department of Slovak Environmental Agency (SEA) had to set up EIA Information System in order to support larger groups of users over more varied network configurations (SEA, Ministry of Environment, regional authorities and district authorities). The EIA IS strategy was proposed to build distributed n-tier information systems using Delphi™ and its DataSnap (before Inprise's Multi-tier Distributed Application Services (MIDAS)) technology. DataSnap is a proprietary Borland technology that enables data (in packets) to be sent across a medium over a distributed network or a file system. DataSnap technology uses several types of connection components that can connect a client dataset to an application server. They differ primarily in the communication protocol they use. SEA’s software architecture is based on TCP/IP and HTTP protocols.

SEA’s intranet and Internet clients are connected through a TCP/IP connection. This architecture works on the principal that a client can connect to a remote server using a TCP/IP port. The server has a daemon that listens on that port and proxies (or re-marshalshs) those requests into the COM layer. The main advantage of this architecture is easy way to configure and to connect to over remote connections.

Specific clients deployed on Ministry of Environment (MoE) are connected through HTTPS protocol. Using this connection in our architecture was the way to avoid firewall problems and securely transfer information across the Internet. Thus MoE clients can communicate through a proxy server and can reach an application server that is protected behind SEA firewall.

The regional authorities and district authorities in Slovakia uses Internet client based on PL/SQL Server Pages technology. Clients can administer EIA datasets according to their authorization.

3. Conclusion

Participation of public in the process of impact assessment enables more effectively identify public interests, needs and values of the citizens in the area, where an activity will be carried out, in advance of the final decision. Public can access information about EIA processes on website: http://eia.enviroportal.sk. The objective of this site is to inform public about proceedings, which ran through the EIA process. Detail information of every EIA action is taken from EIA Information System and serves to all citizens of Slovakia. The main task is to rise environmental awareness and motivate more active participation of all participants to the environmental assessment and to strengthen public know-how about the Environmental Impact Assessment field.