

3.2.4 Malawi

(From P.J. Spong and B. Walmsley: In SAIEA 2003)

a) Legal Framework

Environmental Legislation

The administration of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) process and granting approval of EIAs is facilitated by the Environment Management Act, No. 23 of 1996 (EMA), which is an umbrella legislation and consequently supersedes all other environment and natural resource legislation. The Malawi EIA process is provided in figure 2 below. EMA is supported by the Constitution that acknowledges and supports accountable environmental management as a major input in ensuring that all development initiatives are sustainable.

b) Citizen engagement and Media coverage

Stakeholder engagement is mandatory within the EIA as per the stipulations of EMA. However, public participation is biased towards key stakeholders and places less emphasis to the local communities that are likely to be affected by the project. On the other hand “Media coverage of environmental issues in Malawi is well established” as it is acknowledged that:

- “The Malawi Broadcasting Corporation airs 14 environmental radio programmes per week, four in English and the rest in local languages. An evaluation of these indicates that they have played a significant role in creating public awareness on environmental issues;
- The forum for Environmental Communication, established in 1999, is a forum where journalists report on environmental issues, including EIA;
- A column on environment issues appears weekly in the print media.”

Figure 2. The EIA process in Malawi

