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STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR HAZARDOUS WASTE MANAGEMENT IN MALAYSIA

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This paper examines Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as a tool for hazardous waste management (HWM) in Malaysia. Hazardous waste in Malaysia is designated as scheduled wastes and has been increasing significantly from 1.10 million tonnes in 2006 to 2.76 million tonnes in 2016 where there are currently more than 300 hazardous waste facilities. The siting of hazardous waste facilities has the potential to result in water quality pollution especially in water catchment areas which supply drinking water. Currently, a key problem of HWM is the lack of environmental integration at the policy planning level where environmental issues are mainly addressed during the environmental impact assessments (EIA) of hazardous waste facilities. This has limited effectiveness for addressing cumulative impacts especially for water catchment areas. Meanwhile, the number of river basins categorized as clean had significantly reduced from 80 in 2006 to 58 in 2016 concurrent to the number of rivers categorized as clean which also had reduced from 335 rivers in 2006 to 224 rivers in 2016. Hazardous waste management policies in Malaysia are derived mainly from the Environmental Quality Act 1974, Environmental Quality (Scheduled Wastes) Regulations 2005 and the Environmental Quality (Prescribed Activities) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Order 2015. An SEA gap analysis indicates that a key area for hazardous waste management at the national level is the protection of water quality resources especially water catchment areas. Currently, hazardous waste facility siting is managed in prevailing through EIAs at the Project level. Consequently, the SEA gap analysis indicates that there are limited policy provisions to prevent hazardous waste facilities from being sited within water catchment areas. In conclusion, SEA potentially provides a policy framework for a paradigm shift in HWM from the current project level pollution control approach to a policy level pollution prevention system in Malaysia.

Biography

Dennis Victor has more than 20 years of experience in environmental consultancy in the area of environmental impact assessments (EIA), environmental modelling, waste management and strategic environmental assessment (SEA). He completed his PhD at University Malaya, Malaysia and is currently an Associate Director and EIA Lead in AECOM Malaysia. He has published a number of papers in reputed journals on SEA and waste management.

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