



USAID
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**USAID ARMENIA, SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS
STRENGTHENING PROJECT**

**ԱՄՆ ՄԶԳ ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆ, ՍՈՑԻԱԼԱԿԱՆ ԴԱՇՏՊԱՆՈՒԹՅԱՆ
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SUCCESS STORY

Successful Partnership – Key to Successful Regulation



Photo: SPSS

Public consultation and information exchange is vital in establishing transparency throughout the process of making the regulations economically feasible.



Leaks pollute soil, poison drinking water sources, and migrate to sewerages to create explosive atmospheres

On August 28, 2008, as a result of successful cooperation with the USAID Social Protection Systems Strengthening Project, the Government of the Republic of Armenia (RoA) adopted Technical Regulation on Minimum Requirements for Construction and Operation of Gas Stations. The new regulation reflects all important aspects of the draft regulation created through ME and SPSS cooperation. Specifically, it has the same structure, requires risk assessment and is largely built on performance based norms. The regulation regards safety as a complex issue and encourages preventive Occupational Safety and Health measures.

The occupational safety mandate of SPSS counterpart the State Labor Inspectorate (SLI) led SPSS to look at most dangerous jobs. Technical safety regulations are in the competence of the RoA Ministry of Economy (ME), therefore they were also included in the discussions. Combined regulation and inspection is important for many hazardous industries like petroleum and natural gas storage and handling. As a result, in February 2008, ME requested SPSS Project to assist in developing modern safety regulations for petroleum storage and filling stations that are harmonized with European norms, but with the caveat that they are affordable for Armenia at the current stage of its development.

Stuart Thompson, SPSS Consultant, was asked to work with ME specialists to prepare the regulatory framework to ensure worker safety and environmental protection at petrol stations and terminals. Under direct supervision of the Minister, the ME created a working group of interested government agencies and petrol station businesses. SPSS experts facilitated the discussions of the working group. Based on the preliminary activities, field visits and working group meetings, SPSS proposed draft Safety Regulations, which encompassed occupational safety and health norms, minimum design requirements, drawings and specifications, and dispensing operations.

SPSS conducted training for interested government agencies and business representatives introducing the draft regulations on petrol stations and educating participants on the concept of regulatory reform using risk assessment.

In spring-summer 2008, several accidents happened at natural gas stations which were covered in the Armenian media. ME was compelled to shift its focus to this even more dangerous and wide spread service successfully

reshaping the draft petrol regulations, developed through SPSS help, into new regulations which cover safety at natural gas stations.

This specific experience of studying, drafting, and then adapting and re-drafting brought better-informed decisions and produced a final product suited to immediate local needs. It has empowered government and business participants to develop consensus on safety indicators for which measurement is technically feasible and the cost is not prohibitive. Cost is a major concern among the private sector participants, and this forum showcases a discussion that remained realistic about the resources an enterprise has to meet new standards, and its ability to bear the costs and risks of compliance. Because the rules are realistic they have good prospects for compliance and resultant safety.

The SPSS Project aims to strengthen Armenia's social protection systems, to improve Government of Armenia and NGO institutional and human capacity within the scope of the USAID/Armenia Mission Strategic Objective of improved social protection.

The project offers international and Armenian technical assistance in four key social protection areas; social insurance, employment services, occupational safety and labor protection and social assistance. It aims to facilitate transition to self-reliance and sustainability, while reducing citizens' dependence on public support to meet their basic needs.