

Improving the safety of tailings management facilities based on the example of Ukrainian facilities



Ore processing tailings management facilities (Photo: Grigory Shmatkov)

Background

The failure of tailings management facilities is a major problem worldwide that regularly leads to severe disasters. To address this problem, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) developed in 2009 “Safety Guidelines and Good Practices for Tailings Management Facilities”. These comprise recommendations to authorities on the necessary legal basis for issuing permits for the safe operation of tailings management facilities as well as recommendations to operators on their safe design. The UNECE called on the governments of UNECE countries to incorporate the safety guidelines into their national regulations and technical standards and to apply them. In subsequent years it became apparent, however, that the implementation of the safety guidelines poses problems because they set out safety standards only in general terms.

Project

The aim of the project is to overcome the problems in the implementation of the UNECE Safety Guidelines for tailings management facilities and to thus permanently reduce the risk posed by these facilities. The practicality of the project outcomes will be tested at two Ukrainian facilities.

Following a fundamental analysis of the legal framework with respect to tailings management facilities in Ukraine, a checklist will be developed which can be used by inspectors and operators of tailings management facilities to identify safety shortcomings of these facilities and to derive short-, medium- and long-term measures to address those deficiencies. The checklist shall be developed in consultation with the current international expertise in this area and be based in particular on a catalogue of measures prepared on the basis of international standards.

The practicality of this checklist will be tested in cooperation with inspectors and operators by applying it to two selected Ukrainian facilities. After completion of the practical test, the checklist is intended to be available for use in the entire UNECE region.

- Target country/region: Ukraine, transnational
- Duration: 07/2013 – 06/2015
- Beneficiary: Authorities and plant operators
- Implementing organisation: IHPA, International HCH & Pesticides Association, Denmark
- Project number: 26206