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ANALYSIS OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF ENERGY PROJECTS IN LATVIA

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ABSTRACT

Every industrial activity and procedure influences the environment and climate change: each to a lesser or greater extent. In Latvia, the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedure has been carried out for more than ten years and during these years impact assessments of many projects have been conducted. For most of the projects, an initial assessment is conducted based on the results of which a decision on the application or non-application of the procedure of EIA is made. Requirements for the performance of the initial assessment are stipulated by national legislative acts, however there is not a united approach developed in Latvia for the assessment of the impact, no methodology, limiting values, or criteria developed. Currently, the initial assessment is carried out only based upon environment quality standards, emission limiting values and limits set by legislative acts. In Latvia there are no developed and tested criteria for impact assessment which could improve the quality of the assessment and promote the establishment of a unified approach throughout the country. Latvia is a country with limited resources. The development of the national economy is unthinkable without an increase in the production sector. In turn, the development of the production sector is connected with the intensification of production capacity and the resulting consequences – impact to environment. Power industry in Latvia has acquired a stable position in the national economy. The article surveys the developed benchmark methodology for impact assessment of the power industry projects. The methodology is based on the use of the criterion of impact assessment – eco-indicator. The benchmark methodology developed makes it possible to assess the impacts caused by the provided activity by objective considerations, to conduct comparison of different projects and evaluate whether the provided activity corresponds to the principles of sustainable development.

Keywords: energy projects, environmental impact assessment, benchmark methodology, climate change, eco-indicators.