INTRODUCTION

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A certain idea of globalization has opened the field to de-territorialize our economies, supported by the revolution of new information technologies - those technologies that were supposed to render the very concept of territory obsolete.

But at the same time, in both urban and rural territories, in OECD members as well as emerging countries, relations are, if not downright contentious, at the very least difficult, between companies promoting large industrial projects and neighboring local communities. So-called "high-impact" industries such as mining, oil, dams or large infrastructure, have always experienced these issues and have had to learn to respond to the problem of societal acceptability even before this idea was conceptualized.

But today we are observing a change that is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. The number of projects being challenged locally has increased considerably, and today most industries are confronted with this issue, even when they have a low impact on the territory.

This change is explained by several factors: primacy of the individual over the general interest, which feeds the famous Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY) syndrome; growing rejection of the word of experts when it comes to explaining the environmental and social risks of an industrial project and how to reasonably protect against them; the crucial role of information technologies and communication, now making it possible to talk about sousveillance; etc.

In the face of these developments, a company can respond to these increasingly strong outside pressures that push it, whether it wants to or not, to be incorporated differently in the social fabric of the territories where it operates by taking a defensive approach: by seeking at least to reduce the risks and ensure its social license to operate through dialog, information, and by contributing to local development.

"Businesses need to reinvent their relationship with territories so that they can make the transition from a risk prevention logic to an active strategy of shared wealth creation."

Alternatively, the company can address these issues proactively by deciding that its legitimacy on social issues will be achieved through bringing geography back into decision-making and through its ability to become a sustainable part of the reality of a territory.

"Words say things that we have forgotten about them," said poet René Char. And it is crucial to remember that, for the Greeks who invented the concept, geography was the root of the art of *deciding*. So recovering this relationship with the territory and creating a shared wealth will also enable companies to achieve room for maneuver, innovation and sustainability.

This issue of FACTS, entitled *Environmental and Social Acceptability of Major Industrial Projects*, analyzes these issues. Initially, the aim is to understand the challenges businesses face in making their new projects acceptable, from both an environmental and a societal viewpoint, to the multiple stakeholders confronting them. A second phase is devoted to considering the good practices, based on specific cases, enabling the transition from a risk prevention logic to an active strategy of shared wealth creation. The third and final part aims to understand how to measure the effectiveness of these strategies, by confronting both the announced policies and the actual operating conditions, and by gradually implementing financial assessment methodologies.

This issue thus provides a channel for many of those concerned to speak their minds: those in charge of major projects, association leaders, academic experts, public project owners and public authority managers. This allows us to gather the views of the various actors of the ecosystem on the question of the environmental and social acceptability of major projects.