Topic 13

Social Impact Assessment

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Objectives

To develop an understanding of:

*   the role and scope of Social Impact Assessment (SIA) in relation to the EIA process;
*   the types of social impacts that can result from development proposals; and
*   the principles, procedure and methods that are used to assess and mitigate social impacts.

Relevance

For certain projects, impacts on people can be by far the most important consideration. Adverse social impacts can reduce the intended benefits of a proposal, and can threaten its viability if they are severe enough. In such cases, a social impact assessment (SIA) is carried out as part of the EIA process, or sometimes as a parallel or separate review. This approach is used to analyse the impacts of a proposal on individuals and communities, and to mitigate the adverse effects and enhance the positive effects. It also provides a framework to manage social change.

Timing

Two hours (not including training activity)

> ### Important note to trainers
>
> *You should design your presentation with the needs and background of participants in mind, and concentrate on those sections most relevant to your audience. The session presentation timings are indicative only.*
>
> *Time taken for the training activities can vary enormously depending on the depth of treatment, the existing skills and knowledge of participants and the size of the group.*

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☑ **Information checklist**

Obtain or develop the following, as appropriate:

❑ examples of locally relevant SIA procedure and methods, and examples of how they have been used;

❑ examples of any EIA reports which include reference to social impacts or stand alone SIA reports;

❑ examples of local studies or research on social change, processes and impacts of development, either generally or in relation to particular groups or communities;

❑ estimate of the resources (time, money and expertise) necessary to undertake an SIA of a major proposal, locally;

❑ contact names and telephone numbers of people, agencies, organisations and environmental information/data centres able to provide assistance in relation to social impacts and their assessment; and

❑ other resources that may be available such as videos, journal articles, computer programmes, lists of speakers, and case studies.

Session outline

Welcome participants to the session by introducing yourself and getting them to introduce themselves. Outline the overall coverage of the session, its objectives, and why they are important.

1

This topic provides an introduction to Social Impact Assessment (SIA) and describes the concepts, approaches and methods that are used. It provides basic guidance on why and how SIA is carried out *as an integral part of the EIA process*. Reference is made also to the more comprehensive forms of SIA. Full coverage of SIA would require a training manual of its own.

Briefly outline the role and purpose of SIA in relation to the EIA process. Note that social impacts may also require a comprehensive study, parallel to, but separate from, an EIA.

2

There is no widely agreed definition of SIA. Put simply, it focuses on the impact of development proposals on people. EIA legislation and procedures provide a framework for this purpose; for example, the term environment is defined broadly to include 'social', 'cultural', and other human dimensions. In this context, the aim of SIA is to identify the human consequences of a proposed action, giving particular attention to the mitigation of adverse or unintended aspects. This approach follows approximately the steps of the EIA process.

Under EIA mandates, the scope of SIA differs from country to country, depending on the institutional arrangements that are in place. The consideration of social impacts is triggered by and, in some cases limited to, environmentally related changes. These can be particularly important in developing countries where large numbers of people are dependent on the resource base for their subsistence and livelihood. In other cases, once an EIA is required for a proposal, major effects on the human environment can be considered in their own right. These can include potential changes to population, lifestyle, cultural traditions, community dynamics, and quality of life and well being.

A more comprehensive SIA may be carried out separately from the EIA process. For example, this division is institutionalised at the World Bank, where broadly based SIA, equivalent to understanding and management of social change processes, is promoted in support of the sustainable development agenda. This framework covers the full scope of social considerations, including poverty alleviation, gender balance, governance and institutions, and equity, rights and justice issues. Many SIA practitioners endorse such an overarching approach, beyond what is possible in the

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context of EIA. However, there is not yet a common understanding of its scope, boundaries and content (also called social appraisal or human impact assessment).

Introduce the concept of social impacts and what causes them. Ask participants to identify those that are important locally. Mention that social impacts were addressed in Topic 6 – *Impact analysis* and are an important part of an integrative approach as shown in Topic 15 – *Future directions.*

Social impacts can be defined as the consequences to people of any proposed action that changes the way they live, work, relate to one another, organise themselves and function as individuals and members of society. This definition includes social-psychological changes, for example to people's values, attitudes and perceptions of themselves and their community and environment. Indeed, some SIA practitioners consider social impacts to be only 'as experienced' (e.g. stress, disruption, hunger) and differentiate these from the causal processes (e.g. over-crowding, infrastructure pressure, poverty).

13-1

A composite list of social impacts is contained in Handout 13-1. However, these should be carefully reviewed for their relevance in a given situation or country, for example to development goals or to basic *needs* for food, water and shelter. Not all SIA practitioners would agree with the classification of impacts, and not all of the impacts listed are necessarily considered as part of EIA practice. In addition, many of the impacts listed are not easily measurable, and require analysis of a number of variables. For this reason, basic dimensions of social change are used instead as a reference point, for defining impacts and means of mitigating them.

The key characteristics and variables that are often correlated with adverse social impacts of development proposals include:

3

- demographic change, e.g. size and composition of resident population, influx of temporary work force or new recreational users (disrupts the cohesion of a small, stable community);

- economic change, e.g. new patterns of employment/ income, real estate speculation (marginalises long term, older residents);

- environmental change, e.g. alterations to land use, natural habitat and hydrological regime (loss of subsistence or livelihood in resource-dependent community); and

- institutional change, e.g. in the structure of local government or traditional leadership, zoning by-laws or land tenure (reduced access or loss of control leads to disempowerment or impoverishment of the established population).

The main types of social impact that occur as a result of these project-related changes can be grouped into five overlapping categories:

- *lifestyle impacts* – on the way people behave and relate to family, friends and cohorts on a day-to-day basis;

- *cultural impacts* – on shared customs, obligations, values, language, religious belief and other elements which make a social or ethnic group distinct;

- *community impacts* – on infrastructure, services, voluntary organisations, activity networks and cohesion;

- *amenity/quality of life impacts* – on sense of place, aesthetics and heritage, perception of belonging, security and livability, and aspirations for the future; and

- *health impacts* – on mental, physical and social well being, although these aspects are also the subject of health impact assessment (see Topic 6 – *Impact analysis*).

The key points of the above discussion are that:

- social and biophysical impacts are interconnected and should be assessed together;

- SIA is understood to be concerned with the human consequences of development proposals, identifying all significant social impacts that arise in this context; and

- EIA combined with SIA is an entry point to integrated impact assessment in support of sustainability aims of maintaining natural capital and building human capital (see Topic 15 – *Future Directions*).

Note the types of projects that can require SIA, and indicate how social impacts can vary with different stages of the project life cycle. Ask participants to identify the social changes that are important locally in this context.

Social impacts can be a significant aspect of many types of projects, not only proposals for large scale development, such as a dam or highway, but also in the closing down of existing facilities, such as a military base or government facility. Like environmental impacts, the referents of project-induced social change include severity, duration, probability, importance, etc. They also vary with the setting and the characteristics of the community affected. For example, mining or energy developments adjacent to a small, remote community or in an area occupied or used by indigenous people are almost always associated with major social impacts.

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Often, in EIA, most attention is focused on such high profile issues, notably for projects which displace people and affect vulnerable ethnic minorities (as emphasised in the policy of the World Bank). These are unquestionably important internationally, not infrequently raising issues of human rights and social justice (see case example below). In particular, involuntary resettlement has extreme social impacts, which in many cases warrant separate and specific study. However, these issues are a relatively small sub-set of the overall social impacts associated with development projects.

Examples of projects with important and 'everyday' social impacts include:

- landfill and hazardous waste disposal sites (perceived health risks, loss of amenity);

- power and industrial plants (community stress from influx of work force, pressure on infrastructure);

- dams and reservoirs (lifestyle disruption resulting from relocation, land use alteration or long lead time to full impoundment); and

- roads and linear developments (dislocation of activity networks and relationships).

It is also important to consider how social impacts may vary in accordance with different stages of the project life cycle:

- *Planning or policy development* – This phase, beginning with project notification (or rumour) can have its own social impacts, even though nothing has actually happened. For example, the following can occur:

    – changed expectations or fears about the community and its future;

    – increase or fall in property prices depending on the nature of the proposal;

    – real estate speculation, which locks up or freezes land; and

    – concerns about the environmental, social or health impacts, which may lead to activism, resulting in community polarisation.

- *Construction/implementation* – This phase usually will have the greatest social impact. Construction work is socially disruptive. It frequently involves clearing land, building physical plant and putting in access roads and utilities. The resulting traffic congestion, dust, noise and other hazards typically undermine the quality of life of the resident population. Depending on project type and scale, there may be a large influx of temporary workers, whose demands and behaviour may be at odds with those of local people. In small communities, this phase often creates a strain on community infrastructure and may be marked by a boom and bust cycle. These changes, *inter alia*, may fuel resentment, affect community cohesion or undermine cultural values or traditional institutions.

- *Operation and maintenance* – This phase of a project normally continues over many years. In many cases, it will be relatively stable period compared to the social changes that occurred during construction. For one thing, operation requires fewer workers, and newcomers often become gradually assimilated into the community. Longer-term economic opportunities and social benefits from the development will be realized during this stage. On the other hand, the operation of power, industrial and waste treatment facilities can bring another set of social impacts and health hazards from pollution emissions. However, the community also may be different from that which existed before the project was constructed, possibly adjusting to an industrial operation if it is carefully managed.

- *Decommissioning or abandonment* – This phase can have a significant social impact, especially where a facility is the mainstay of the local economic base or the only employer as in a single purpose mining community. Depending on condition and location, it may be possible to convert a site to its former or an alternative use, such as restoring an open pit mine for agriculture or recycling a port facility to recreational or commercial use. In other cases, however, industrial lands may be contaminated and require costly remediation treatment to rehabilitate or secure them to ensure the health and safety of nearby residents.

Box 1: Social impact of the Sardar Sarovar scheme, India

Project background

Long planned, construction of the Sardar Sarovar scheme began in 1987. It comprises: a high dam on the Narmada River approximately 180 km upstream from the Arabian Sea; a large reservoir impounding water to a level of approximately 150m and submerging 37,000 hectares of land across three states; the diversion of 9.5 million acre feet of water from the Narmada River into a canal and irrigation system to deliver drinking and irrigation water to drought-prone areas of Gujarat. The main canal is 250m wide at its head and 100m wide at the Rajasthan border 450 km distant. With an aggregate length of 75,000 km, the distribution network will require approximately 80,000 hectares of land, double the submergence area.

Social issues and impacts

The environmental and social impact of the project components is immense and extends over a wide area. At least 100,000 people, in 245 villages, live in the area affected by submergence. In Gujarat and Maharashtra almost all of those affected are tribal people. In addition, there are 140,000 families who will be disrupted by the construction of the canal and irrigation system. Finally, there are the people living downstream below the dam, numbering thousands more, who also will be adversely affected. Sardar Sarovar became the focus of the debate, in India and internationally, on how to balance economic development on the one hand, and human rights and environmental protection on the other.

Independent SIA and EIA review

Now in its final stages, the scheme was also heavily criticised because of the deficiencies in the EIA and SIA processes which were applied. In 1992, the Sardar Sarovar scheme became the subject of an independent review commissioned by the World Bank and triggered by its credit and loan agreement with the Indian and state governments involved. On the social side, the review was to consider the measures being taken for the resettlement and rehabilitation of people displaced or affected by the reservoir and infrastructure or affected by the canal. On the environmental side, it was to consider measures being taken to ameliorate the impact of 'all aspects of the Projects'.

Key findings and conclusions

At the time of the review, World Bank directives had set the highest standards for mitigating adverse consequences to people who were to be involuntarily resettled (although these were not in force when the credit and loan agreements were signed). Bank policy requires that those displaced improve or at least regain their prior standard of living. In addition, their human rights must be respected, and cannot be nullified on grounds of national sovereignty or economic interest.

The issues in Sardar Sarovar were complicated because the majority of those displaced were tribal people who usually have no formal title to the land they occupy and were considered by two state governments to be encroachers and not entitled to resettlement. The review found this position to be non-compliant with recognized norms of human rights. In addition, it concluded that a number of issues of related to the environmental impact of the scheme were unresolved and questioned the assumptions used in project design and mitigation.

After the Bank issued performance 'benchmarks' for the scheme, India advised that it would not call on the outstanding balance of the loan and would complete the Sardar Sarovar itself.

Source: Berger (1994).

Describe the benefits of SIA, highlighting the importance of systematically addressing the human consequences of major proposals. Ask participants to develop a list of benefits relating to local conditions.

Despite increasing use, SIA still is not uniformly required or carried out for all development proposals with significant human consequences. This is the case in many developing countries, where meeting basic human needs is understandably seen as an overwhelming priority. However, the Sardar Sarovar scheme (Box 1) exemplifies how disregarding social impacts can alter the benefit-cost equation of development and, in this case, undermine its overall viability. Many dams and other types of projects, with potentially significant social impacts, have been criticised because an inadequate SIA or

none at all was carried out (see, report of the World Commission on Dams at http://www.dams.org).

For such projects, the benefits of undertaking a systematic SIA can include:

- *reduced impact* on communities or individuals – identification of mitigation measures is an integral element of SIA;

- *enhanced benefits* to those affected – SIA preparation also helps identify measures such as job training packages;

- *avoiding delays and obstruction* – a well prepared SIA demonstrates that social impacts are taken seriously and helps to gain development approval;

- *lowered costs* – addressing social impacts and mitigation measures at an early stage helps to avoid costly errors and remedial actions imposed at a later stage by regulatory agencies;

- *better community and stakeholder relationships* – experience has shown that SIA can help to allay fear and concern and build a basis of trust and cooperation necessary for the proponent to successfully introduce and operate the project; and

- *improved proposals* – an SIA provides information that adds value to existing projects and helps to design future ones.

In many cases, the above benefits of SIA are not anticipated or expected by the different parties involved in the process. For example:

- developers may focus only on the short term costs of the SIA, see it as a process that may be 'hijacked' by proponents, or consider the risk of early disclosure outweighs any potential benefit of conducting the study;

- governments or decision makers may not support transparency of the decision making process; and

- communities may not consider the SIA process as impartial or may see it as a mechanism to deflect their objections to a project.

Discuss the steps and principles of SIA, noting the similarities and differences to the process followed in EIA.

Typically, the SIA process follows the iterative steps taken in the EIA process, although with a different emphasis to take account of the impacts on people (as shown in Box 2 below). Most obvious is the particular type of information gathered for an SIA, which can include basic characteristics of the affected population, current issues, political and civic institutions, social structures, cultural traditions and attitudes and social-psychological attributes. A participatory approach is also strongly represented in the SIA process, beginning at the earliest stage and continuing throughout. Other

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elements of the SIA process that are distinctive include prediction of impacts in terms of how affected people will respond in attitude and behaviour.

As in EIA, SIA practitioners place considerable importance on mitigation, monitoring and impact management. In addition, post-project analysis is recognised as critical to gaining a better understanding of social impacts and how to manage them. However, in practice, implementation and follow up are not always undertaken systematically, and, often, SIA continues to be a one-off exercise that cannot be grounded in the context of comparable projects. This process constrains SIA practice, undermines its potential contribution to decision-making and inhibits its acceptance by others; for example, when people affected by a proposed change, understandably, individualise and exaggerate impacts and comparable, empirical information is wanting.

In this context, considerable guidance is now available on SIA good practice, both generally and with specific reference to EIA procedures established by countries or international agencies such as the World Bank. The principles and guidelines outlined in Box 3 were prepared by leading SIA practitioners from the US. However, they are sufficiently generic to have gained a measure of international acceptance. Most importantly, perhaps, the principles and main steps of the SIA process indicate how common issues of SIA practice, such as data limitations, can be addressed.

Other SIA practitioners have refined this framework to meet their particular purposes. Currently, an IAIA project is underway to develop International Guidelines and Principles for Social Impact Assessment (see www.iaia.org). For example, this project has identified principles relating to the integration of biophysical and social impacts which:

•   recognize that all environmental impacts are experienced in human terms;

•   extrapolate all biophysical changes to their implications for people; and

•   take account of the implications of seasonality for people and their activities.

Ideally, an interdisciplinary approach will be taken to integrate SIA and EIA studies (see Topic 12 – *EIA project management*). At a minimum, the information on social and environmental impacts should be synthesised into a coherent impact statement (see Topic 8 – *Reporting*). When an SIA is conducted as a separate study or is a major component in its own right, it should be conducted with reference to the EIA process (and *vice-versa*) and key findings should be cross referenced.

Box 2: Steps in the SIA process

1. *public involvement* – develop and implement an effective public involvement plan to involve all interested and affected stakeholders

2. *identification of alternatives* – describe the proposed action and reasonable alternatives to it, including the no action alternative

3. *profile of baseline condition* – document the relevant human environment/area of influence of the proposal and the existing social conditions and trends (using the characteristics and variables described previously)

4. *scoping* – identify and prioritise the range of likely social impacts through a variety of means, including discussion or interviews with numbers of all potentially affected

5. *projection of estimated effects* – analyse and predict the probable impacts of the proposal and the alternatives against baseline conditions (with versus without the action)

6. *prediction and evaluation of responses to impacts* – determine the significance of the identified social impacts to those who will be affected

7. *estimate indirect and cumulative impacts* – identify the subsequent, flow-on effects of the proposal, including the second/third order impacts and their incremental impacts when added to other past, present and foreseeable current activities

8. *changes to alternatives* – recommend new or changed alternatives and estimate or project their consequences for affected and interested stakeholders

9. *mitigation* – develop and implement a mitigation plan, in order of preference to firstly avoid, secondly minimise and thirdly compensate for adverse impacts

10. *monitoring* – develop and implement a monitoring programme to identify deviations from the proposed action and any important unanticipated impacts

Source: Interorganizational Committee on Guidelines and Principles [for Social Impact Assessment] (1994).

6 & 7

Box 3: Principles of SIA good practice

- *involve the diverse public* – identify and involve all potentially affected groups and individuals

- *analyse impact equity* – identify who will win and who will lose, and emphasise vulnerability of under -represented groups

- *focus the assessment* – deal with the issues and public concerns that really count not those that are just 'easy to count'

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- *identify methods and assumptions and define significance* – describe how the SIA is conducted, what assumptions are used and how significance is determined

- *provide feedback on social impacts to project planners* – identify problems that could be solved with changes to the proposed action or alternatives

- *use SIA practitioners* – trained social scientists employing social science methods will provide the best results

- *establish monitoring and mitigation programmes* – manage uncertainty by monitoring and mitigating adverse impacts

- *identify data sources* – use published social scientific literature, secondary data and primary data from the affected area

- *plan for gaps in data* – make clear any incomplete or unavailable information and the reasons why this could not be obtained

Source: Interorganizational Committee on Guidelines and Principles [for Social Impact Assessment] (1994).

Review the methodological frameworks, sources of information and tools that are used in SIA. Ask participants to consider the approach that might be applied to assess social impacts that are relevant locally.

There are sharp differences among SIA experts on the methodological frameworks that should be applied to assess social impacts. A number of orientations can be identified. Notably, there is a polarisation between the rational-scientific approach, which emphasises prediction of change (with versus without the project), and the socio-political approach, where SIA is oriented toward community development and empowerment. In practice, however, these differences may not be so apparent, moderated by EIA procedure and Terms of Reference and by a common emphasis on the management of social impacts.

Both schools of SIA draw on the following sources of information:

- data about the proposal;

- experience with similar actions, e.g. as evidenced in other SIA reports;

- census and vital statistics on the area/ population affected;

- secondary materials, which document baseline conditions and trends; and

- survey and field research, including interviews, meetings and other contact means.

A number of tools and techniques are used to assess the human impact of development proposals. Much of the analytical work in SIA centres on prediction of potential change in key social variables as established in the

scoping phase. Some of the methods that are commonly applied for this purpose are outlined in Box 4. A larger kit of social assessment tools and methods identified by the World Bank are described in Handout 13-2. It classifies methods into five types of overlapping approach: analytical, community–based, observation and interview, participatory, and workshop-based.

The World Bank tool kit has particular reference to SIA in the context of developing countries. It emphasises interactive methods, which can be used to collect baseline information, to build a profile of the existing social situation and to gain an understanding of how a proposal might affect a community. Some of the methods engage stakeholders directly in the process of predicting impacts. For example, participatory and community-based approaches involve affected local people in estimating how their lifestyles are likely to alter as a result of projected changes. However, these estimates should be corroborated, especially if there is no local experience of the kinds of impacts expected.

Depending on its scope, an SIA may use a number of tools and techniques. This can help to address the problem of incomplete data, as well as compare and highlight any variations in information derived from different sources. Generally, an integrated approach, which combines a number of methods, will provide the most composite and reliable prediction of impacts and identification of suitable measures to mitigate and manage them. In practice, however, this is not always possible, and often no more than two or three SIA tools will be used in an EIA-based process.

At a minimum, the prediction of social impacts should be based on:

• understanding of the affected population – how are people likely to respond to and be affected by a given proposal?

• comparison with similar cases – what is the experience with the effects of proposed actions on similar communities elsewhere?

• appropriate expertise and knowledge base – has the analysis been undertaken by an experienced SIA practitioner using suitable methods and tools?

Box 4: Methods commonly used for predicting social impacts

trend extrapolations – projecting current trends, such as population change or employment, into the future (with or without modifying the rate of change)

population multipliers – extrapolated increases in population size are coefficients for the change in other variables, such as employment and demand for housing, infrastructure or services

consulting experts – use of expert knowledge such as researchers, professional consultants, local authorities, or knowledgeable citizens

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scenarios – exercises to develop the likely, alternative or preferred future of a community or society. Scenarios can be used to compare different outcomes (best versus worst case)

comparative studies – examining how an affected community has responded to change in the past, or the impact on other communities that have undergone a similar action

Source: adapted from Taylor, Goodrich and Bryan (1998).

Consider aspects of good practice in the conduct of an SIA study, including factors that need to be taken into account to implement the principles described earlier. Ask participants to consider which aspects are important when assessing social impacts locally.

When conducting an SIA, the following factors and considerations can assist in implementing and amplifying the principles set out in Box 3:

- *identifying trends* – when gathering baseline data on an affected community, it is important to situate the profile or 'snap shot' in a dynamic context by identifying the changes that are occurring already from non-project sources;

- *taking account of initial response to project announcement* – support or opposition may be an impact itself or an indicator of the likely degree of community cohesion or conflict over social issues;

- *qualifying data sufficiency and reliability* – where SIA is hampered by a lack of adequate data, err on the conservative side in reporting any potentially significant impacts (e.g. stating that it cannot be ruled out with confidence rather than concluding it is not proven);

- *predicting key issues* – it is better to be roughly correct on the matters that count, rather than quantifying the impacts that can be counted; and

- *team building* – experienced social scientists need to be an integral part of the EIA team to predict these key issues and establish linkages to biophysical impacts. Often, team building must address cultural style as well as disciplinary differences, for example when relating an SIA to the EIA and project planning timetable on the one hand and the norms and traditions of an affected community on the other.

Analysing impact equity, who gains and who loses from a proposal, is central to the SIA process. Good practice principles are set out in Box 5. Normally, emphasis will be given to identifying and mitigating adverse impacts. These impacts should be specified and reported for each group likely to be differently affected and appropriate mitigation measures taken to ensure their brunt is not borne disproportionately. In this regard, particular attention is given to highlighting adverse impacts on people who

are sensitive or vulnerable, for example by reason of age, gender, ethnicity, caste, poverty or other factors.

Examples include:

- communities and groups who are dependent on land and resources for their subsistence and livelihood, typically, are significantly affected by a proposal that reduces or degrades the resource base or alters their access, use or management regime;

- indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities are at particular risk in this regard, since their culture, lifestyle and values are inseparably attached to their environment;

- long term residents or the elderly may suffer greater health and psychological impacts than other groups as a result of community disruption; and

- the poor, landless, illiterate and disadvantaged often struggle to express or press their concerns because they lack political power and influence over events.

Impact equity can be effectively assessed only if an attempt is made to minimise any bias and take full account of the consequences for disadvantaged and marginalised groups. SIA practitioners guard against the following factors:

- *spatial bias* – information gathering focuses on accessible locations and overlooks remote or nomadic tribes;

- *seasonal bias* – an SIA may be carried out at a time when it is difficult to gain a representative information on an affected community, for example during harvest time or hunting season;

- *personal bias* – consultation and interviews may be dictated by cultural traditions or power structures, for example limited to political leaders, elders or men; and

- *professional bias* – lack of interaction between disciplinary specialists may result in important links between the environment and society being omitted.

Box 5: Good practice in analysing impact equity

- predict adverse impacts

- specify for each group

- explain reasons for variations

- highlight impacts on vulnerable groups

- guard against representational bias

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> Conclude by stressing the importance of good practice in mitigation, monitoring and management of social impacts. Ask participants to consider which are locally the most important aspects in mitigating social impacts.

The practical emphasis in SIA is on mitigation of the adverse impacts of a proposal and, more broadly, the management of social change. Principles that are specific to impact management and minimisation are summarised in Box 6. These elaborate the guiding principles introduced earlier (Box 3) and recognise the need for a proactive approach to this phase of SIA. In particular, the concern is to move away from a narrow focus on the role of prediction, seeing it as a necessary step to design customised measures for avoiding, reducing and managing social impacts, for example of an influx of construction workers into a small settlement.

Mitigation for social impacts should follow the same hierarchy that is used for other types of impact (see Topic 7 – *Mitigation and impact management*). This gives priority first to impact avoidance, second to reduction or minimisation of impacts, and lastly to offset or compensation. Social impacts can be avoided by 'at source' changes, for example, site selection of a dam or airport project so people do not have to be relocated or their lives disrupted. Impacts can be reduced by various measures, such as sound proofing houses within the noise footprint of an airport, scheduling construction traffic, use of dust suppression techniques, etc. Compensation should be used for residual impacts only where no other options are available to ensure people are no worse off than before.

Where compensation is unavoidable, it is often inappropriate to provide this only in monetary form. This is invariably the case for indigenous peoples and other vulnerable communities, which cannot replicate their lifestyle elsewhere or mediate the impacts experienced. In other cases, monetary compensation places the onus of solving the problem on the individual or community, rather than on those who are responsible for causing the impact. Equally, however, there are circumstances where a compensation package can be used in positive and innovative ways to support social development that otherwise may not be possible.

Monitoring and other follow up activities are critical to strengthening mitigation practice and to improving the effectiveness of SIA, in general. As in EIA, the main purpose of monitoring is to identify differences between predicted and actual social impacts in order to determine whether and what type of adjustments and interventions are necessary (see Topic 11 – *Implementation and follow up*). In developing and transitional countries, where experience with SIA may be limited, institutional and capacity building may be required to effectively carry out impact management. SIA training needs and priorities for a given country may differ from those identified for EIA in

general, and should be specified separately (see Topic C – *Training needs analysis*).

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Box 6: Good practice in impact mitigation and management

- identify mitigation measures for each impact

- customise them to the different groups affected

- give priority to avoiding social impacts

- then minimise them as far as practicable

- use compensation as a last resort

- ensure impacts are not borne disproportionately by one group

- no one should be worse off than before

- treat relocation/resettlement as a special case

- livelihoods of those displaced should be improved

- enhance benefits for local people through job training and development packages

Include a training activity to reinforce the topic (if desired).

Summarise the presentation, emphasising those aspects of the topic that apply locally.

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Reference list

The following references have been quoted directly, adapted or used as a primary source for major parts of this topic.

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Further reading

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Topic 13

**Social
Impact
Assessment**

Training activities

Training activities will be more instructive if they are framed around a local proposal. Consider inviting prospective course participants to make a presentation if they have expertise in this area of EIA.

Discussion themes

13-1 What types of social issues and impacts are associated with development proposals locally?

13-2 How are these impacts addressed and under which processes? Does the EIA process apply? If not, is this because of the legal provision or just accepted practice?

13-3 What changes, if any, would be necessary to include consideration of social impacts in the EIA process? What should be the scope of consideration of social impacts in EIA? Should there be a separate SIA process?

13-4 Where SIA is part of EIA it follows similar steps, including scoping and consideration of alternatives. What information needs to be gathered to identify the key social impacts of a development proposal? How might this information then be used to identify feasible alternatives to a proposal?

13-5 SIA methodology involves estimating the response of people to predicted impacts and evaluating who gains and who loses (impact equity). How might these activities be carried out as part of an SIA conducted locally? What methods and expertise would be needed and available for this purpose?

13-6 What measures might be used to mitigate social impacts that are important locally? How could their effectiveness be monitored, and what management strategies could be adopted in the event that an impact is greater than forecast?

13-7 Consider whether local capacity and data sources are sufficient to carry out the key stages and activities of SIA. If not, how can the information and expertise best be developed, and what kind of strategy can be followed in conducting SIA in the interim?

Speaker themes

13-1 Invite a speaker who is knowledgeable about the local societal structure and values to review key trends and developmental issues, and to provide a perspective on how communities and groups respond to proposed actions.

13-2 Invite a speaker who has experience in managing or conducting an SIA locally to discuss the various approaches/methodologies that have been used and how they could be improved in future work. The presentation should be supported by examples of the work.

13-3 Invite a speaker who has experience with SIA methods to show the participants how they work and what they can be used for. Ensure that some of the discussion covers the data requirements for the method and that note is made of any limitations.

Topic 13

Social Impact Assessment

Group Activity 13-1: Determining the scope of an SIA

Title: **Social impact scoping**

Aim: To understand how scoping procedures can be used to identify the key social impacts of a proposal

Group size: Four to six people

Duration: Half to one day, depending on the desired level of detail

Resources required:

❑ Background information from local project(s).

❑ Copies of Handout 13-1.

❑ Summary of Topic 5 – *Scoping*.

❑ Examples of EIA checklists, matrices etc that can be adapted to identify the social impact of candidate project(s).

Description of activity:

❑ Get the group as a whole to review Handout 13-1 to adapt/develop a shortlist of social impacts that are relevant locally in relation to development proposals.

❑ Assign each group the task of adapting and applying one of the methods (matrix, checklist etc) to identify the social impacts for a project.

❑ Assemble the group as a whole and ask each small group to summarise its findings, noting any problems that were encountered, the impacts that were identified and how the method used might be improved.

Group Activity 13-2: Review of social impact assessment

Title: **Consideration of impact equity – who gains and who loses**

Aim: To gain an appreciation of the quality of an SIA report and how it can be evaluated

Group size: Pairs

Duration: Half to one day, depending on the required level of detail

Resources required:

❑ An EIA/SIA report for each pair (prepared locally or containing information on social impacts that are relevant locally).

❑ Handout 13-2 – Social assessment methods.

Description of activity :

Each pair is to:

❑ review the EIA/SIA report, listing the groups that were affected and the major social impacts that were identified;

❑ check whether or not the impacts predicted were differentiated in relation to each affected group and there was a statement of who gained and who lost;

❑ summarise the strengths and weaknesses of the approach taken, including the methods used and the way the findings were reported; and

❑ recommend how the approach could have been improved, giving particular attention to methods that may be more suited to assess impact equity.

The whole group should convene to discuss the findings.
Assemble the group as a whole and ask each small group to summarise its findings, noting any problems that were encountered, the impacts that were identified and how the methods used might be improved.

Topic 13

Social Impact Assessment

Aims and objectives of SIA are to:
- analyse how proposals affect people
- identify and mitigate adverse impacts
- enhance benefits
- help manage social change

1

Scope of SIA
- SIA conducted under EIA legislation and procedure
- scope of SIA differs with jurisdictional arrangements
- initially limited to environmentally-related changes
- larger range of social impacts now considered
- comprehensive SIA often a separate process
- focuses on social issues of sustainable development, poverty alleviation and justice

2

Causes of social impacts
- demographic change, e.g. population size and composition
- economic change, e.g. employment and income
- environmental change, e.g. air and water quality
- institutional change, e.g. law and administration

3

Types of social impact
- lifestyle – behaviour and relationships
- cultural – customs, values and religious beliefs
- community – infrastructure, services and networks
- amenity / quality of life – sense of security, livability and futurity
- health – mental and physical well being

4

SIA benefits can include:
- reduced impact on people
- enhanced benefits for those affected
- avoiding delays and obstruction
- lowering costs by timely actions
- better community and stakeholder relationships
- improved future proposals

5

Steps in the SIA process

- public involvement plan
- identification of alternatives
- profiling of baseline conditions
- scoping of key issues
- projection of estimated effects
- prediction and evaluation of responses to impacts
- estimate indirect and cumulative impacts
- recommend changes to alternatives
- develop and implement a mitigation plan
- develop and implement a monitoring programme

6 & 7

Principles of SIA good practice

- involve the diverse public
- analyse impact equity
- focus the assessment
- identify methods and assumptions and define significance
- provide feedback on social impacts to project planners
- use experienced SIA practitioners
- establish monitoring and mitigation programmes
- identify data sources
- plan for gaps in data

8 & 9

Sources of SIA information

- data on the proposal
- experience with similar actions
- census and vital statistics
- secondary documents
- survey and field research

10

Topic 13

**Social
Impact
Assessment**

Methods commonly used for predicting social impacts include:

- trend extrapolations
- population multipliers
- use of expert knowledge
- scenario building
- comparative studies

11

Basis of good practice in prediction of social impacts

- understanding those affected and their likely responses
- comparisons with experience in similar cases
- use of appropriate expertise and knowledge base

12

Good practice in analysing impact equity

- predict adverse impacts
- specify for each group
- explain reasons for variations
- highlight impacts on vulnerable groups
- guard against representational bias

13

Good practice in impact mitigation and management

- identify mitigation measures for each impact
- customise them to the different groups affected
- give priority to avoiding social impacts
- then minimise them as far as practicable
- use compensation as a last resort
- ensure impacts are not borne disproportionately by one group
- no one should be worse off than before
- treat relocation/resettlement as a special case
- livelihoods of those displaced should be improved
- enhance benefits for local people through job training and development packages

14 & 15

Social Impact Assessment methods
_____

Social Impact Assessment methods ◆

Individual and household level

1.   death, death of family member

2.   arrest, imprisonment, detention, torture, intimidation or other abuse of human rights inflicted on
       individual

3.   reduced availability of food and adequate nutrition

4.   reduced control over fertility (availability of contraception, and empowerment)

5.   reduced level of health and fertility (ability to conceive)

6.   reduced mental health increased stress, anxiety, alienation, apathy, depression

7.   uncertainty about impacts, development possibilities, and social change

8.   actual personal safety, hazard exposure

9.   experience of stigmitisation and deviance labelling

10.   reduction in perceived quality of life

11.   reduction in standard of living, level of affluence

12.   worsening of economic situation, level of income property values

13.   decreased autonomy, independence, security of livelihood

14.   change in status or type of employment, or becoming unemployed

15.   decrease in occupational opportunities potential diversity flexibility in employment

16.   moral outrage, blasphemy, religious affront, violation of sacred sites

17.   upset (objection/opposition to the project), NIMBY (not in my back yard)

18.   dissatisfaction due to failure of a project to achieve heightened expectations

19.   annoyance (dust, noise, strangers, more people)

20.   disruption to daily living, way of life (having to do things differently)

21.   reduction in environmental amenity value

22.   perception of community, community cohesion, integration

23.   community identification and connection to place (do I belong here?)

24.   changed attitude towards local community, level of satisfaction with the neighbourhood

25.   disruption to social networks

26.   alteration in family structure and stability (divorce)

27.   family violence

28.   gender relations within the household

29.   changed cultural values

30.   changed perceptions about personal health and safety, risk, fear of crime

31.   changed leisure opportunities

32.   quality of housing

33.   homeliness

34.   density and crowding

Social Impact Assessment methods

35.   aesthetic quality, outlook, visual impacts

36.   workload, amount of work needed to be undertaken to survive/live reasonably

Community and institutional level

1   death of people in the community

2   violation of human rights, freedom of speech

3   adequacy of physical infrastructure (water supply, sewerage, services and utilities)

4   adequacy of community social infrastructure, health, welfare, education, libraries, etc.

5   adequacy of housing in the community

6   workload of institutions, local government, regulatory bodies

7   cultural integrity (continuation of local culture, tradition, rites)

8   rights over, and access to, resources

9   influences on heritage and other sites of archaeological, cultural or historical significance

10   loss of local language or dialect

11   debasement of culture

12   equity (economic, social, cultural)

13   changed equity /social justice issues in relation to minority or indigenous groups

14   gender relations in the community

15   economic prosperity

16   dependency/autonomy/diversity/viability of the community

17   unemployment level in the community

18   opportunity costs (loss of other options)

19   actual crime

20   actual violence

21   social tensions, conflict or serious divisions within the community

22   corruption, credibility and integrity of government

23   level of community participation in decision making

24   social values about heritage and biodiversity

Adapted from: Vanclay F (updated version) Summary of work on IAIA International Guidelines and Principles for Social Impact Assessment.

Social Impact Assessment tools and methods

Analytical tools

Stakeholder Analysis is an entry point to SIA and participatory work. It addresses strategic questions, e.g. who are the key stakeholders? what are their interests in the project or policy? what are the power differentials between them? what relative influence do they have on the operation? This information helps to identify institutions and relations which, if ignored, can have negative influence on proposals or, if considered, can be built upon to strengthen them.

Gender Analysis focuses on understanding and documenting the differences in gender roles, activities, needs and opportunities in a given context. It highlights the different roles and behaviour of men and women. These attributes vary across cultures, class, ethnicity, income, education, and time; and so gender analysis does not treat women as a homogeneous group.

Secondary Data Review of information from previously conducted work is an inexpensive, easy way to narrow the focus of a social assessment, to identify experts and institutions that are familiar with the development context, and to establish a relevant framework and key social variables in advance.

Community-based methods

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) covers a family of participatory approaches and methods, which emphasises local knowledge and action. It uses to group animation and exercises to facilitate stakeholders to share information and make their own appraisals and plans. Originally developed for use in rural areas, PRA has been employed successfully in a variety of settings to enable local people to work together to plan community-appropriate developments.

SARAR is an acronym of five attributes -- self-esteem, associative strength, resourcefulness, action planning and responsibility for follow-through -- that are important for achieving a participatory approach to development. SARAR is a philosophy of adult education and empowerment, which seeks to optimise people's ability to self-organize, take initiatives, and shoulder responsibilities. It is best classed as an experiential methodology, which involves setting aside hierarchical differences, team building through training, and learning from local experience rather than from external experts.

Consultation methods

Beneficiary Assessment (BA) is a systematic investigation of the perceptions of a sample of beneficiaries and other stakeholders to ensure that their concerns are heard and incorporated into project and policy formulation. The purposes are to (a) undertake systematic listening, which "gives voice" to poor and other hard-to-reach beneficiaries, highlighting constraints to beneficiary participation, and (b) obtain feedback on interventions.

Observation and interview tools

Participant Observation is a field technique used by anthropologists and sociologists to collect qualitative data and to develop in-depth understanding of peoples' motivations and attitudes. It is based on looking, listening, asking questions and keeping detailed field notes. Observation and analysis are supplemented by desk reviews of secondary sources, and hypotheses about local reality are checked with key local informants.

Semi-structured Interviews are a low-cost, rapid method for gathering information from individuals or small groups. Interviews are partially structured by a written guide to ensure that they are focused on the issue at hand, but stay conversational enough to allow participants to introduce and discuss aspects that they consider to be relevant.

Focus Group Meetings are a rapid way to collect comparative data from a variety of stakeholders. They are brief meetings -- usually one to two hours -- with many potential uses, e.g. to address a particular concern;

Social Impact Assessment tools and methods

to build community consensus about implementation plans; to cross-check information with a large number of people; or to obtain reactions to hypothetical or intended actions.

Village Meetings allow local people to describe problems and outline their priorities and aspirations. They can be used to initiate collaborative planning, and to periodically share and verify information gathered from small groups or individuals by other means.

Participatory methods

Role Playing helps people to be creative, open their perspectives, understand the choices that another person might face, and make choices free from their usual responsibilities. This exercise can stimulate discussion, improve communication, and promote collaboration at both community and agency levels.

Wealth Ranking (also known as well-being ranking or vulnerability analysis) is a visual technique to engage local people in the rapid data collection and analysis of social stratification in a community (regardless of language and literacy barriers). It focuses on the factors which constitute wealth, such as ownership of or right to use productive assets, their relationship to locally powerful people, labour and indebtedness, and so on.

Access to Resources is a tool to collect information and raise awareness of how access to resources varies according to gender, age, marital status, parentage, and so on. This information can make all the difference to the success or failure of a proposal; for example, if health clinics require users to pay cash fees, and women are primarily responsible for accompanying sick or pregnant family members to the clinic, then women must have access to cash.

Analysis of Tasks clarifies the distribution of domestic and community activities by gender and the degree of role flexibility that is associated with each task. This is central to understanding the human resources that are necessary for running a community.

Mapping is an inexpensive tool for gathering both descriptive and diagnostic information. Mapping exercises are useful for collecting baseline data on a number of indicators as part of a beneficiary assessment or rapid appraisals, and can lay the foundation for community ownership of development planning by including different groups.

Needs Assessment draws out information about people's needs and requirements in their daily lives. It raises participants' awareness of development issues and provides a framework for prioritising actions and interventions. All sectors can benefit from participating in a needs assessment, as can trainers, project staff and field workers.

Pocket Charts are investigative tools, which use pictures as stimulus to encourage people to assess and analyse a given situation. Made of cloth, paper or cardboard, pockets are arranged into rows and columns, which are captioned by drawings. A "voting" process is used to engage participants in the technical aspects of development issues, such as water and sanitation projects.

Tree Diagrams are multi-purpose, visual tools for narrowing and prioritising problems, objectives or decisions. Information is organized into a tree-like diagram. The main issue is represented by the trunk, and the relevant factors, influences and outcomes are shown as roots and branches of the tree.

Workshop-based methods

Objectives-Oriented Project Planning is a method that encourages participatory planning and analysis throughout the project life cycle. A series of stakeholder workshops are held to set priorities, and integrate them into planning, implementation and monitoring. Building commitment and capacity is an integral part of this process.

TeamUP was developed to expand the benefits of objectives-oriented project planning and to make it more accessible for institution-wide use. PC/TeamUP is a software package, which automates the basic step-by-step methodology and guides stakeholders through research, project design, planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Source: edited and abridged from document on the World Bank web site (http//www.worldbank.org.)