

HANDBOOK OF SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT

RESEARCH HANDBOOKS ON IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Series Editor: Frank Vanclay, *University of Groningen, the Netherlands*

The objective of this series of *Research Handbooks on Impact Assessment* is to provide a critical assessment of the state-of-the-art in the research and thinking in the various fields of impact assessment, including environmental impact assessment, strategic environmental assessment, social impact assessment, health impact assessment, biodiversity assessment, cumulative impact assessment, and so on. The series will also consider the use of impact assessment across a variety of sectors, including agriculture, energy, forestry, mining, transport. The aim is to produce prestigious high-quality works of lasting significance, offering a comprehensive overview of the research fields in question. With oversight from the Series Editor, Professor Frank Vanclay, a noted specialist in the field of impact assessment, the *Research Handbooks* comprise carefully commissioned chapters from leading academics and/or reflexive practitioners selected by editors who are recognized leaders in their field. Taking a genuinely international and often transdisciplinary approach, the books in the series address current and sometimes controversial issues. Through clear analysis and lucid writing, these *Research Handbooks* are designed to shed light on contemporary issues and contribute to current debates. Offering unrivalled analysis and discussion, each *Research Handbook* will be an invaluable source of reference for an international audience of scholars, researchers and practitioners involved with the study and utilization of impact assessment.

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Handbook of Social Impact Assessment and Management

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Preface

Social Impact Assessment (SIA), in the context discussed in this edited book, relates to the processes of analysing, monitoring and managing the social consequences of planned interventions. SIA considers the positive and negative, intended and unintended, social impacts that are or potentially could be created by such interventions. Although the notion of ‘planned interventions’ includes policies, plans, programmes, as well as projects, the application of SIA has primarily been in relation to projects, large and small. Consequently, this edited book focuses on SIA as it is applied to projects (i.e. ‘project SIA’). In this context, ‘projects’ means activities like, for example, the construction and operation of airports, big buildings, bridges, canals, dams, dredging activities, factories and industrial plants, mines, pipelines, ports, power stations, railway lines, roads, solar farms, transmission lines, tunnels, urban redevelopment, windfarms, and large-scale land acquisition for agriculture or plantations. In the assessment of a project’s social impacts, any ‘associated facilities’ (ancillary, auxiliary or additional activities or subprojects) that are essential for the successful operation of the main project, such as access roads, worker accommodation complexes, quarries, transmission lines, power plants, etc., also need to be considered.

Project SIA is primarily an *ex ante* (in advance) form of assessment (prediction) that is undertaken to feed into the decision-making around a specific project. Such decisions include whether regulatory approval and/or financing for the project should be given or not, what approval conditions (sometimes called *conditionalities*) should be applied, and how the project could be modified to mitigate harmful impacts and enhance beneficial outcomes. SIA can also assist in decision-making about the appropriate siting of a project and/or project facilities (and additional activities). Project SIA is intended to assist regulators, proponents, affected communities and the financiers of projects, as well as to enhance general understanding about how individuals and communities are affected by projects. To increase the knowledge base of the SIA field of practice, and to enhance skill in the prediction of impacts, the retrospective or *ex post* evaluation of the actual impacts of completed projects is also done. However, the actual experience of impacts from a project can often vary from the predicted impacts because of the implementation of mitigation measures, modification of the project away from initial specifications, and the extent to which people learn to cope with or adapt to the changes brought about by the project, or otherwise accommodate the project, for example, by relocating elsewhere. Although SIA is primarily undertaken for planned interventions, its theories and techniques are also applied to phenomena such as disasters (cyclones, hurricanes, major storms, earthquakes, floods, droughts, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, wildfires, etc.) and accidents (explosions, catastrophic fire, dam collapses, etc.).

The term, ‘Social Impact Assessment’, has been in existence for over 50 years, and the SIA field of research and practice is well established, as evidenced by a large body of literature, and the existence of a professional association, the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) (www.iaia.org). However, SIA has not necessarily become part of broader public awareness, at least not all around the world. Even ‘Environmental Impact Assessment’ (EIA) has not been part of much of the general public’s vocabulary or understanding. So, for example, saying something like, ‘SIA could be seen as the social equivalent of EIA’ as a start-

ing point to explain what SIA is about does not necessarily help understanding, especially to those people who had not heard of EIA!

In the last decade or two, confusion around the meaning of SIA has increased due to the rise of several other discourses using the term. There are at least four other discourses claiming to be ‘social impact assessment’. One is in the field of social work, and relates to attempts to improve the social outcomes from social work programmes. Closely related to this is the use of SIA in the fields of philanthropy and social investment, where attempts are made to establish in advance (or measure afterwards) the likely social return from investment in particular activities or enterprises. Another discourse, in the field of evaluation, relates to attempts to measure the change created in some social outcome indicator that was due to a specific intervention. Yet another, in the field of policy studies, attempts to predict and/or measure the extent to which specific policy actions achieve or are likely to achieve desired social policy goals. In all these discourses there is some overlap with project SIA as discussed in this book; however, there are also major differences. These other fields tend to focus only on the intended benefits from the intervention and arguably ignore the negative consequences that might arise. In contrast, project SIA (the discourse in this book) tends to focus on the negative social impacts (both expected and unexpected) that might be created by a project and potentially under-considers the benefits that could be created. The failure to consider the positive outcomes was a valid criticism of project SIA in the past, although this has been changing over time, with more emphasis now being given to enhancing the benefits in project SIA.

Project SIA (as in this book) is a discourse, paradigm, and an established field of research and practice. Drawing on the French philosopher/sociologist Michel Foucault, ‘discourse’ here means not only the language and words used, but also how they are used by a particular group of people (the people in the discourse). This understanding also implies that the discourse is a system for organising ideas, thoughts, knowledge, understandings and communication, and that it reflects and constructs understanding of and experience within that discourse. Paradigm is a somewhat similar concept, and derives from Thomas Kuhn, an American philosopher of science/epistemologist. Paradigm refers to a specific set of concepts, theories, methods, general understandings, exemplars and standards that are held by a particular community of scholars and/or practitioners. While a discourse and paradigm potentially exist even if they are not codified or formalised, they are more evident when they are codified by some formal body, such as a professional association.

From the inception of SIA in the early 1970s, a discourse and paradigm around project SIA has emerged and consolidated over time. This discourse is embodied in journal articles, especially those published in the two key journals, *Impact Assessment & Project Appraisal* and *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*, presentations at the annual conferences of the International Association for Impact Assessment, in certain key books on SIA, and by various publications published by the IAIA or other organisations. Some key publications commissioned and endorsed by the IAIA have codified the field of SIA at different points in time:

- 1994: Interorganizational Committee on Guidelines and Principles. Guidelines and Principles for Social Impact Assessment. *Impact Assessment*, 12(2), 107–152. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07349165.1994.9725857>. Also published in 1994 by the US Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service as a NOAA Technical Memorandum, number NMFS-F/SPO-16. https://repository.library.noaa.gov/view/noaa/6208/noaa_6208_DS1.pdf

- 2003: Vanclay, F. International Principles for Social Impact Assessment. *Impact Assessment & Project Appraisal*, 21(1), 5–11. <https://doi.org/10.3152/147154603781766491>
- 2015: Vanclay, F., Esteves, A.M., Aucamp, I., & Franks, D. *Social Impact Assessment: Guidance for Assessing and Managing the Social Impacts of Projects*. Fargo, ND: International Association for Impact Assessment. https://www.iaia.org/uploads/pdf/SIA_Guidance_Document_IAIA.pdf

In addition to the above three key publications, over the years several ‘state of the art’ papers have been acknowledged within IAIA as being significant in establishing the SIA discourse, including:

- Wolf, C.P. (1974). Social Impact Assessment: The State of the Art. *EDRA Proceedings*, 5(2), 1–44.
- Finsterbusch, K. (1985). State of the Art in Social Impact Assessment. *Environment and Behavior*, 17(2), 193–221. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916585172002>
- Burdge, R., & Vanclay, F. (1996). Social Impact Assessment: A Contribution to the State of the Art Series. *Impact Assessment*, 14(1), 59–86. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07349165.1996.9725886>
- Esteves, A.M., Franks, D., & Vanclay, F. (2012). Social Impact Assessment: The State of the Art. *Impact Assessment & Project Appraisal*, 30(1), 34–42. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14615517.2012.660356>
- Vanclay, F. (2020). Reflections on Social Impact Assessment in the 21st Century. *Impact Assessment & Project Appraisal*, 38(2), 126–131. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14615517.2019.1685807>

The current book joins three earlier edited books on SIA published by Edward Elgar, all of which are also part of the established SIA discourse:

- Becker, H., & Vanclay, F. (eds) (2003). *The International Handbook of Social Impact Assessment: Conceptual and Methodological Advances*.
- Vanclay, F., & Esteves, A.M. (eds) (2011). *New Directions in Social Impact Assessment: Conceptual and Methodological Advances*.
- Vanclay, F. (ed.) (2014). *Developments in Social Impact Assessment*.

The contributors to this current book are mostly experienced professional SIA practitioners. In their chapters, they share their understandings, learnings and advice, concentrating on current topical issues. This book is recommended reading for a wide range of audiences including: SIA practitioners; people and organisations who commission or review SIAs; environmental, social and community NGOs and individuals interested in how SIA is applied; and advanced students interested in learning about SIA or about how projects impact on individuals and communities. We hope that this book will improve the practice of SIA, increase interest in SIA, and lead to better projects, the better management of projects, and to the increased well-being of host communities.

Frank Vanclay and Ana Maria Esteves
Groningen, January 2024

PART I

THE CONTEXT IN WHICH SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OPERATES

1. Setting the scene for good social impact assessment and management

Frank Vanclay and Ana Maria Esteves

INTRODUCTION

The field of Social Impact Assessment (SIA) is over 50 years old. SIA is now generally seen as being about the appropriate management of the social issues associated with project implementation. It is usually defined as: ‘Social Impact Assessment includes the processes of analysing, monitoring and managing the intended and unintended social consequences, both positive and negative, of planned interventions (policies, programmes, plans, projects) and any social change processes invoked by those interventions. Its primary purpose is to bring about a more sustainable and equitable biophysical and human environment’ (Vanclay, 2003, p. 6). SIA practitioners are expected to advocate on behalf of affected communities and to ensure fair, human rights compatible outcomes from projects.

SIA started as a regulatory tool in the 1970s to assist in determining whether approval for a project should be given, and if so, under what conditions. Sometimes SIA was done as a standalone exercise; other times it was a component of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process or was integrated into an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA). SIA has evolved over time, and has become a field of research and practice, a discourse, and a paradigm (Aledo-Tur & Domínguez-Gómez, 2017; Vanclay, 2023), with hundreds of practitioners across the world. That field is currently codified by two key documents published by the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA): the *International Principles for Social Impact Assessment* (Vanclay, 2003) and *Social Impact Assessment: Guidance for Assessing and Managing the Social Impacts of Projects* (Vanclay et al., 2015). In addition, various other guidance documents (Kvam, 2018; Munday, 2020; Taylor & Mackay, 2022; NSW, 2023), key journal articles (Vanclay, 2002, 2012; O’Faircheallaigh, 2009; Esteves et al., 2012, 2017; Baines et al., 2013; Franks & Vanclay, 2013; Aucamp & Lombard, 2018), and books (Goldman, 2000; Dale et al., 2001; Becker & Vanclay, 2003; Taylor et al., 2004; Vanclay & Esteves, 2011; Vanclay, 2014; Mathur, 2016) elaborate on SIA in its present understanding. Many analytical models inform SIA scholarship and practice, including: the Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction Model (Cernea, 1997); the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (Scoones, 1998); the SIA Framework for Action (Imperiale & Vanclay, 2016); the Social Framework for Projects (Smyth & Vanclay, 2017); the Social Vulnerability Approach (Climent-Gil et al., 2018); and the PLANNED Approach (People’s Livelihoods Analysis in Economic Displacement) (Esteves, 2021).

Despite the 50-year history, growing interest in SIA, and all the guidance that is available, there are major issues confronting the application of SIA in project development. The first is that SIA is rarely a mandatory regulatory requirement (although often is a condition of financing) and, even though there are strong reasons why it should be done, SIA is sometimes seen as a source of cost and delay rather than as being essential and beneficial. Second, there still

is a pervasive technocratic, ‘asocietal mentality’ (Burdge & Vanclay, 1996), an attitude that economic or environmental concerns take precedence over social concerns, that is prevalent in some companies, government agencies, and politicians. People and organisations that hold this attitude don’t consider engaging with affected communities to be necessary, and they are often ignorant of and/or antithetical to social research methods and social science thinking. Also, they often hold negative attitudes about the members of local communities (Moreira et al., 2022). Third, the consultancy firms that undertake SIAs often don’t have experienced or qualified staff, leading to inadequate assessments that, typically, are not subject to rigorous review. Fourth, experienced and qualified staff are difficult to find, and few universities offer courses in SIA. Fifth, the competitive tendering for SIA work and the lack of established criteria by which to select consultants have led to a race to the bottom. Sixth, there can be political pressure for certain projects to proceed, and thus there is often limited interest in anything that might impede project approval. All this tends to result in SIA being a box-ticking exercise rather than being a useful tool contributing to better outcomes for communities and projects.

Notwithstanding all these issues, with the growing interest in the field of SIA and its development over 50 years (Vanclay, 2014), there is now a clear understanding about what constitutes good practice SIA, which is largely what the chapters in this edited book expound. In essence, as discussed below, good practice SIA requires: explicit recognition of the underlying complexity of the issues SIA deals with; competent practitioners; competent, socially aware project staff and companies; empowered communities; and good governance and regulatory oversight.

THE COMPLEXITIES FACED BY SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

As SIA is about people’s lives and how they will be affected by projects, it necessarily confronts complex issues and difficult discussions. To give an indication of some of the controversial issues, a complexity faced by SIA is how taboo topics and black market, informal economy activities are affected by projects. Sometimes, affected people may obtain a substantial proportion of their income from illegal or stigmatised activities, for example from the sale of prohibited items, by engaging in businesses that do not disclose all their income, from sex work, or from other activities that do not always meet with social approval. There may be sacred sites that cannot be revealed to outsiders, or taboo topics that cannot be discussed with others. Women’s participation in decision-making is a taboo topic in certain cultures. By drawing attention to these issues, SIA might create conflict in the community and, if poorly managed, may even result in harm being wrought upon certain individuals. Furthermore, project staff may be resistant to any discussion of these topics, whether as a result of their own biases and prejudices, or as an aversion to risk-taking on behalf of the company they work for.

Another feature of SIA is that the relationship between project activities and the experience of social impacts is complex and is confounded by many issues. Most important is that a distinction needs to be made between social change processes and the experience of social impacts (Vanclay, 2002). What is actually experienced depends on many issues, including the effectiveness of community engagement, the extent to which the project is seen as being legitimate (has a social licence to operate), the impact history of the affected communities, the effectiveness of mitigation, and the level of resilience in the community (Esteves et al., 2017). It is not possible to predict precisely what will happen, and negative experiences from individ-

ual encounters or minor issues can accumulate. Big accidents can also occur, fundamentally changing the relationship between communities and the project. Projects also tend to change over time, and the expectations of the community will change over time as well.

Another issue is that direct impacts lead to indirect (second and higher order) impacts. In an SIA worldview, it is completely understood that a project could trigger changes that might eventuate in domestic violence, alcoholism, and other social issues; however, the technical staff of projects often find it hard to accept that their project could *cause* such impacts, and they generally do not accept that they are responsible for these subsequent social consequences.

The prevalence of corruption adds to the complexity of the context in which SIA is conducted. While corruption is more likely to be at the project level (e.g. bribes to approve projects), an outcome can be that ESIA reports are perfunctory and/or have no influence on decision-making. Various forms of malpractice also occur in ESIA consulting firms (Kahangirwe & Vanclay, 2022). Often the community engagement activities are box-ticking exercises with no genuine interest in what local communities have to say (Gulakov et al., 2020). A further issue is an implicit embedded conflict of interest in that consultants are paid by companies, often for which they have worked before, and for whom they are likely to do more work in the future. Structurally, this means that the consulting firms are beholden to these companies, and are unlikely to make strong statements against their client. All this has led to many accusations that SIA practice has been instrumentalist (Domínguez-Gómez, 2016; Serje, 2017).

COMPETENT SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONERS

Good SIA practitioners need to be interdisciplinary, applied social scientists, with good people skills, good social research skills, and a good understanding of community issues. Good report writing skills are also essential. Unfortunately, given the theoretically focused and discipline-based nature of most social science training, few universities adequately prepare graduates for an SIA career. Therefore, learning on the job is essential, and various intensive professional short courses are available to assist in this (refer to the SIAhub at <https://socialimpactassessment.com>). To be competent, SIA practitioners need to have a general comprehension of a vast array of topics, and the ability to know when additional expert assistance is needed. The Social Practice Forum has published a *Competency Framework for Social Performance Practitioners* (SPF, 2020), which lists 47 specialisations. Clearly, no person could be fully proficient (let alone expert) in all topic areas and, therefore, just as with EIA, teams of practitioners are needed in SIA practice. SIA practitioners would normally be expected to embrace certain values, including equity, fairness, and justice (Vanclay, 2003), and have a range of competencies (SPF, 2020; Esteves & Moreira, 2021).

A competency can be defined as ‘a specific combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, aptitudes and character traits that are expressed in a person’s behaviour, and that are essential to effectively perform the professional tasks in a specified field’ (SPF, 2020, p. 6). Although the Social Practice Forum identified 31 competencies (SPF, 2020), Esteves and Moreira

(2021, pp. 4–5) narrowed this down to 13 sub-competencies grouped under three higher-order competencies:

- **empathy involves communication-related competencies, cross-cultural self-awareness, and stakeholder attentiveness and considerateness;** involves communication-related competencies, cross-cultural self-awareness, and stakeholder attentiveness and considerateness;
- **coping with complexity** involves attending to cultural differences, promoting equity across stakeholders, integrating multiple (and often divergent) perspectives, sharing information that is helpful to others, and considering project and personal constraints;
- **accountability involves team, project and financial management competencies, as well as resilience in the face of task demands, reproach by others, and feedback given about mistakes made.** involves team, project and financial management competencies, as well as resilience in the face of task demands, reproach by others, and feedback given about mistakes made.

The following story illustrates these competencies and their importance. It involved a review (at corporate headquarters request) of a mining operation that identified possible non-conformance with the United Nations (2011) *Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights*. On presenting their report to the client, the study team was confronted by what seemed to be a disproportionate amount of resistance. The reported issues related to: Indigenous peoples' rights; environmental impacts that also had community health consequences; community access to sufficient clean water; the adequacy of the grievance redress mechanism; and the community's vulnerability to economic dependence on the mine. The resistance surprised the study team, because its members had assumed that: (a) there was a shared understanding of the scope of the work; and (b) their findings confirmed much of what was already known by the client. Also, in the study team's view, all the necessary conditions for a credible assessment were in place: a multi-disciplinary team (social, business and human rights, legal, environmental, health and mining sector domains); competent local partners to conduct stakeholder engagement activities; and a preparation phase that included a visit to corporate headquarters, interviews with corporate managers, a presentation to the CEO and the Executive Management team, and a short training session with site management. However, after delivery of the report, a range of defensive behaviours were exhibited, including the client scapegoating the study team's methodology for its alleged lack of rigour, and the study team scapegoating the client for a lack of skills and understanding of what had been commissioned. Ultimately, some of the study team's recommendations were taken up and communities are now arguably a bit better off than they were before. However, the process led to a sub-optimal outcome and the study team was left wondering what they could have done better to achieve more effective outcomes for communities.

In hindsight, if the study team and the client team had been mindful of the core competencies of Empathy, Coping with Complexity, and Accountability, they would not have approached the assessment solely as a classic research exercise aimed at providing objective, independent data, and detached from the client's organisational context. A competent SIA practitioner is not only someone who is able to deploy technical proficiency across many specialisations; they must also develop certain core competencies, including the ability to interact effectively with clients. The study team should have explicitly considered what would have helped or hindered acceptance of the findings and implementation of the recommendations. This would

include understanding the client's organisational culture and the motivations and skills of individual staff. Deploying the sub-competence of resilience, which is about how a practitioner deals with opposition, criticism, and feedback, would also have helped the study team to be: more accepting of the client's reaction; less defensive; and better able to work together with the client to jointly make sense of the findings and implement actions to address the issues.

If the study team had explicitly applied Empathy (towards the client), they would have been more attuned to the fact that the client was not familiar with qualitative social research. In the study team's interactions with the client, the possibility for any differences in assumptions, expectations about the methods to be used, and potential concerns about rigour in the assessment methodology should have been explored and resolved. Perhaps the study team should have been more confident and competent to defend what constitutes rigour in qualitative social research methods (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Moon et al., 2016).

The study team continued to conduct assessments for the same company across another five sites around the world, learning along the way. Their confidence and ability to discuss issues with the client staff grew from their increasing experience in a number of SIA topic areas: assessing the impacts of mine activities on local people; determining the human rights consequences of these impacts; applying social research methods in different situations; identifying and engaging people with vulnerabilities; and identifying psychosocial impacts, past trauma, and social conflict. They also learnt to fine-tune their core competencies, especially by putting themselves in the shoes of other stakeholders, including: the proponent; the regulatory authority; and affected peoples. This reveals another competency that is essential for SIA practitioners, that of having a mindset of reflexivity and professional growth.

Extrapolating from this story to SIA practice generally, it is clear that more attention needs to be given to the development of SIA professionals and their capacity to deal with the problems they confront in fulfilling their role (Esteves & Moreira, 2021). A major problem for SIA practitioners is that there are often conflicting expectations about their role, for example, between the instrumentalist 'communities management' perspective of some projects that is typically driven by the motives of reputation enhancement and corporate risk reduction, versus genuine efforts to understand and respond to the concerns of affected communities and to reduce the risks that communities experience, as would be driven by a different way of thinking about the role of business in society, by being committed to procedural and distributive justice, or by seeing local community members as 'rights-holders' (Kemp & Vanclay, 2013; Harvey & Bice, 2014; Esteves et al., 2017; Joyce et al., 2018; Kemp & Owen, 2018; Esteves & Moreira, 2021). Being aware of this difference in perceptions of the role of SIA practitioners, being able to negotiate with clients about the role, being able to educate the client, and having frequent check-in points, all assist in ensuring an ongoing common understanding and desirable outcomes for all parties. Post-project reviews are also essential for the ongoing learning of the client and the SIA practitioner.

To enhance SIA practice and ensure the quality of SIA practitioners, systems for the certification of SIA practitioners should be established around the world, and the use of certified practitioners should be a requirement of all SIA practice. Certification is a process by which some entity (usually an independent body) accords formal recognition to an individual or firm to establish that they have met certain predetermined criteria, thus certifying that they are appropriately qualified and competent (see Chapter 3).

COMPETENT, SOCIALLY AWARE PROJECT STAFF AND COMPANIES

In past decades, project staff tended to be technical specialists who had very little understanding of social issues. As there are many reasons why companies should consider social issues (see Chapter 8), including the cost of conflict to projects (Franks et al., 2014), there is now an increasing number of project developers making concerted efforts to build their internal capacity in relation to SIA and social performance. This includes appointing staff with appropriate skills, and implementing appropriate policies, procedures, and management systems. There are also corporate efforts to: integrate social performance across the wide range of functions; ensure relevant data is available to inform company decisions; ensure adequate resourcing for social performance; establish peer learning networks internally and industry wide; ensure compliance oversight; and increase staff capacity for social performance. Some companies are adopting the ICMM (2022) *Social Performance Maturity Matrix* to guide their strategy of ‘hardwiring’ social performance into the organisation.

In general terms, what is expected from project developers is that they will (adapted from Vanclay & Hanna, 2019):

- hire sufficient numbers of qualified and experienced SIA/social performance staff who have appropriate competencies and are adequately resourced;
- implement a meaningful, inclusive, and ongoing stakeholder engagement process from the very beginning of the project;
- be fair, act in good faith, and be perceived as being transparent, honest, and genuine;
- treat communities with respect, and fully respect the human rights of local communities;
- understand and be respectful of local culture and heritage, and take appropriate measures to protect culture and heritage;
- provide a valid and convincing justification for the project and for all major decisions that affect local communities;
- be technically competent, be able to ensure safety and the avoidance of social and environmental harm, and be perceived as such;
- fully compensate people for all tangible and intangible losses;
- deliver benefits to local communities and ensure there are effective benefit-sharing arrangements in place;
- empower communities by providing training and capacity building, having local content and local procurement policies and procedures, and involve local communities in decision-making;
- be part of the community, be vested in the community, and be seen as such;
- act with full transparency and accountability, including by encouraging and supporting community-led monitoring and evaluation of potential impacts, mitigation measures, and the adequacy of benefit-sharing programmes;
- ensure that the broad community support of local people is gained before proceeding with any project and that this support is maintained throughout the life of the project.

The following story illustrates the consequences of projects not getting the minimum expectations right. It relates to a situation where an SIA study team was asked to help a project developer respond to strong community opposition to a proposed mine. The developer intended to compensate fence-line communities for the loss of access to communal land that would be

experienced. Although against the study team's advice, but with good intention, the developer made a public commitment that compensation would be given in some form of payment to each individual in three affected villages. The payments would be made annually over the life of the project (likely to be around 10 years). Residents of those villages that lost access to more communal land would receive a relatively higher individual payment, based on a pro rata calculation, which would see some people getting an almost trivial annual payment, and others getting a not insignificant payment.

Without foundational concepts to analyse their commitment, the developer was concerned about the practical challenges of defining eligibility for payments (given issues of who actually had legitimate use of the communal land, and the high rate of absentee land owners and part-time residents) and the mechanics of actually making the payments. The study team was able to identify that the developer's intent was not compensation strictly speaking, but rather a form of benefit-sharing. These two concepts – compensation for loss of access to a natural resource (communal land), and benefit-sharing – were being confused. This confusion presented a risk of fuelling the existing company–community conflict for many reasons, including issues of fairness, eligibility, and the adequacy of the proposed payment (if it was to be compensation for loss of access). Insights from the field of SIA call for differentiating between compensation and benefit-sharing. Unfortunately, the social impacts from the loss of access to communal lands, and how people individually and collectively would be affected by this, had never been assessed, and were not considered in the regulatory EIA process or by the developer. These issues were significant and would not be eased by token payments. There was a need to employ methods that were fit-for-purpose: a socio-economic survey to inform appropriate compensation measures; and a needs assessment and community visioning process to inform any benefit-sharing measures the project might provide. A decision about what form benefit-sharing ought to take should only be decided after such a process. Furthermore, the stakeholder analysis and engagement processes should be designed to address the potentially separate needs of these two objectives (compensation and benefit-sharing).

EMPOWERED COMMUNITIES

Ensuring that communities do not suffer from harm caused by projects and that they are not exploited by projects requires that they be empowered. Most important is that people in project-affected communities know their rights and are willing to take various forms of action to defend their rights. There are many things that local people can do to exert pressure on projects, which is much more effectively done when serious consideration, planning, and coordination are given to the protest strategy, rather than protest or resistance just being the result of spontaneous actions (Hanna et al., 2016). Communities also need to have adequate resources to effectively challenge a project, including links to appropriate national and international networks, as well as financial resources so that they are able to access independent legal advice, mediation, and expert opinion about the likely impacts of a proposed project. Arguably, projects ought to provide financial resources so that project-affected communities can access independent advice in order to negotiate effectively with project proponents, thus ensuring better outcomes for all. Changing how SIA is done, from being an external intrusion, potentially creating its own negative social impacts, to being an empowering internal 'community-controlled impact assessment', would make a major difference to the accepta-

bility of the assessment and project approval processes, and would likely increase acceptance of projects (O’Faircheallaigh, 2017; see Chapter 10).

Communities need to have unrestricted access to all relevant information about the projects that will affect them. This needs to be in a manner and language that is appropriate for them. There also needs to be appropriate mechanisms to ensure that communities are able to have a voice and that their concerns are appropriately considered. This includes having effective governance arrangements in place to ensure that communities are adequately supported (see below). Communities should carefully consider the project to ensure that they are fully aware of the negative impacts the project might create. Ideally, all communities should be able to say ‘no’ or ‘yes’ to a project and have their views and decisions respected (Hanna & Vanclay, 2013). Communities that are in favour of a project, or are at least accepting of the opportunities that it brings, should be able to negotiate an Impact and Benefit Agreement with the project (O’Faircheallaigh, 2020; see Chapter 34). There should be access to effective grievance redress mechanisms and there must be provisions to prevent reprisals against human rights and environmental defenders. Finally, a basic principle of democracy and the rule of law is the concept of ‘access to justice’. This means more than just having access to the courts or other dispute resolution bodies; it means that there must be equal access for all persons irrespective of their means (including by state-supported legal aid services), that there must be sufficient capacity in the national judicial system to hear matters within an adequate timeframe, that there is a process for determining who can bring environmental matters to court (with reasonable latitude in such decisions), and that there is a right to challenge decisions of lower courts. Affected people need to have access to justice, need to know that they have such access, and not be intimidated or otherwise hampered in their ability to access justice.

A story illustrating what can be possible when an affected community is empowered relates to a renewable energy project that led to economic displacement. The relationship between the community and the project developer was highly fractured. When a survey of the various dimensions of social licence to operate was conducted among all affected households, only one-third expressed that they were satisfied with their relationship with the project developer. With the assistance of a human rights NGO, the community lodged a complaint with the financiers of the project relating to a range of impacts. The financiers intervened and provided financial support for a mediator that was acceptable to the community, the NGO, and the company. Within less than one year, the relationship had turned around, and the community members collectively wrote and signed a letter of thanks to the developer for having participated in the mediation process, listened to the community’s concerns, and acted on the livelihood restoration activities that the developer had promised. This shows that companies do not necessarily need to fear empowered communities and that better outcomes may well be possible for all.

GOOD GOVERNANCE AND REGULATORY OVERSIGHT

The final component of what makes good SIA is having appropriate governance arrangements and an effectively functioning regulatory system. Effective regulatory oversight requires that there be appropriately funded regulatory agencies with competent staff who have sufficient time and resources to consider projects and associated impact assessments, and conduct monitoring and follow-up. The policy context and decision-making processes must be fair,

and there must be appropriate checks and balances. This means that there must be a review process of SIA reports to ensure that they are done to a reasonable standard. A requirement for practitioners and consultancy firms to be certified would also be appropriate.

In a United Nations understanding of governance, the state is a ‘duty-bearer’ and has a primary obligation to respect, protect, and fulfil the human rights of people (who are regarded as being ‘rights-holders’) (Götzmann et al., 2016). Given that projects can affect a vast array of human rights (Kemp & Vanclay, 2013; Esteves et al., 2017; van der Ploeg & Vanclay, 2017), including the human right to water and the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, states have a fundamental duty to actively ensure that human rights harms are not created by projects (see Chapter 15). This implies not only that ex ante ESIA should be done to inform project approval processes, but also that there be an effective process of ongoing monitoring, adaptive management, and ESIA follow-up (see Chapter 37).

Good governance criteria for policy and legal frameworks are highlighted in Chapter 2, including: regulatory consistency across all legal instruments covering social issues and coordination between the institutions involved in ESIA review, decision-making, and monitoring; coverage of certain specific social issues, such as community health and safety, occupational health and safety, working conditions, Indigenous people, resettlement and livelihood restoration, cultural heritage, project-induced in-migration, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, gender, and opportunities for benefit-sharing with surrounding communities; a process for identifying all potential issues and concerns from all stakeholders; provisions for mitigation and enhancement management plans; and measures to promote compliance and clear sanctions for failure to implement social management plans and meet social performance commitments.

HOW DOES SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT RELATE TO SOCIAL PERFORMANCE?

With the understanding of SIA expanding from originally being about the process of assessing, in a regulatory context, the social consequences likely to arise from a planned project (Burdge & Vanclay, 1996) to being more generally about the processes of analysing, monitoring, and managing the social consequences arising from a project (Vanclay, 2003; Vanclay et al., 2015), the discourse and practice of SIA now includes a broader range of activities. SIA is no longer just the ex ante assessment of the potential impacts of a proposed project. Arguably, SIA is also about: community engagement; negotiating free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) and Impact and Benefit Agreements (or Community Development Agreements); gender analysis; understanding vulnerability; managing project-induced in-migration; ongoing community relations/liaison; negotiating, planning and implementing community investment activities; facilitating local community development; improving livelihoods; human rights due diligence; implementing and managing grievance redress mechanisms; cultural heritage; thinking about life after project closure; and many other things associated with the implementation of projects in host communities. These issues are addressed by the chapters in this book.

This expansion in the scope of SIA has led to some confusion, and to a need for clarity and differentiation among the many specific tasks falling under the umbrella of SIA. In the corporate context, differentiation of these tasks is essential for adequate role definition and position descriptions, especially because of the large number of professionals now working in the social space of projects and performing differentiated functions. In corporate circles, the

overarching labels increasingly used are ‘social function’ (Kemp & Owen, 2018) and ‘social performance’. ‘Social impact assessment’ is usually reserved for the specific act of the ex ante prediction of social impacts as part of an environmental licensing procedure. Thus, despite all our arguments and exhortations that SIA should be regarded as a discourse and as a field of research and practice (Esteves et al., 2012; Vanclay et al., 2015; Vanclay, 2020), we see that SIA is now once again tending to primarily refer to the ex ante assessment of the likely or potential impacts of a project. However, for the purposes of this book and consistent with the last 20 years of understanding in this field (Vanclay, 2003; Vanclay & Esteves, 2011; Esteves et al., 2012; Vanclay et al., 2015), we consider that SIA is an overarching discourse that addresses all ‘processes of analysing, monitoring and managing the intended and unintended social consequences, both positive and negative, of planned interventions’ (Vanclay, 2003, p. 6). Nevertheless, in our view, the terms ‘SIA’ and ‘social performance’ can be used interchangeably.

The differentiation in terms has become evident in other ways as well. In the view of people who have been in the SIA field for decades (and for example those who might say that SIA was a social form of EIA), the SIA field has appropriately expanded to assume more tasks. However, recent entrants to the social performance field, or specialists in a specific area of social performance, may not necessarily see it that way at all. They might not know much about SIA as a task and/or might not comprehend that SIA could be considered to be a discourse, and they do not accept that SIA is the umbrella term for the social field. This also means that they do not necessarily see the International Association for Impact Assessment as being relevant to them and/or as being the appropriate professional association for their work. In this context, a new professional association, the Social Practice Forum (<https://socialpracticeforum.org/>), has been established. Although starting out as a support group for a small number of practitioners, the Social Practice Forum is now growing and is assuming many functions of a professional association. Among other resources it has produced, the Social Practice Forum has published a set of briefing notes about each of the various tasks undertaken by social performance practitioners, which is collectively called the *SP101 Series* (SPF, 2021). The Social Practice Forum (SPF, 2021, p. 5, quote marks and italics in the original) defines social performance (SP) as follows:

“Social performance is the sum of a company’s interactions, activities and outcomes that can affect stakeholders.” The aim of SP is to avoid harm to people from company activities, to contribute to the social and economic development of affected people and society more widely, and to establish relationships of trust between companies and stakeholders for mutual benefit. A key focus is on achieving company goals in a way that, at a minimum, does not conflict with societal expectations and goals and that, ideally, creates value for society by addressing its needs and challenges.

Esteves and Moreira (2021, p. 1) put it slightly differently: ‘We define social performance as how well a company or project does in terms of all its interactions with local communities, especially in relation to meeting the objectives of avoiding harm, having trusting relationships, and contributing to equitable conditions by which host communities and the company can attain their development aspirations.’ These definitions are essentially similar to the current understanding of SIA (as the umbrella concept). However, a significant distinction exists. The understanding of the Social Practice Forum is that social performance is a corporate activity aligned with the corporate mission and arguably about getting a social licence to operate, whereas the understanding within the SIA field is that SIA (as a discourse about the social

understanding of projects) is something that people in communities also need to understand, relates to the governance of projects by regulatory agencies, and can also be of academic interest. Most likely, there will be further evolution in these terms over the coming years.

CONCLUSION

Social impact assessment is a field of research and practice, a discourse and a paradigm. The discourse of SIA provides an all-encompassing understanding of the relationship between communities and projects, and of the complex social issues faced during project development. SIA also provides support for determining appropriate actions to undertake in project development to avoid or reduce harms to people and to enhance outcomes for communities and projects.

In the past, too many businesses have extracted wealth by placing burdens on the environment and on local communities, often having the belief that they were justified and legitimate in doing so. But such behaviour is no longer tolerated by local communities and is not consistent with international standards. Now, project developers must have a valid justification for their project that is accepted by local communities, and projects must be implemented in a way that is consistent with international standards. This includes ensuring that there is awareness and proper management of the negative social impacts that might be created, and careful consideration given to enhancing the outcomes for local communities. This means that there is a huge demand for SIA practitioners. Given the complexity of the social issues experienced in project implementation, many competencies are required by social performance practitioners, especially the core competencies of empathy, coping with complexity, and accountability. Good SIA practitioners need to be interdisciplinary, applied social scientists, with good people skills, good social research skills, and a good understanding of community issues.

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2. National legal frameworks for social impact assessment and management

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INTRODUCTION

The laws and regulations prescribing how the social risks and impacts of projects are to be managed tend to be contained within national Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) legislation. However, it is well established that social impacts are inadequately considered in EIA, leading to inadequate assessment and mitigation of social impacts and poor outcomes for communities. Weak regulatory systems may also make it difficult for investment projects to conform to international standards, as there might be disputes between a project and national authorities about what should be included in assessments, and a duplicated system (one for national authorities, another to meet international standards) adds cost and complexity. Even where the national legal framework for projects has additional laws or regulations addressing aspects of social risk that are missing from EIA law (e.g., labour laws, mining laws, forestry law, etc.), typically there is poor coordination between the multiple regulatory agencies and implementation capacity is weak. This leaves many risks unaddressed, including where a social impact assessment (SIA) has been prepared according to international standards.

By sharing the experiences of a range of countries, the purpose of this chapter is to inspire government officers and social performance advisers who are looking for ways to strengthen national regulatory systems in relation to project social risk and impact management. The national laws and regulations of 28 jurisdictions were reviewed for how they address social risks and impacts in public and private sector projects. In a facilitated process, these countries were nominated by members of the Social Practice Forum, a professional association that brings together experienced practitioners from around the world who seek to advance social performance practice. The 28 countries were places where Social Practice Forum members had familiarity and were countries that had at least some level of inclusion of social issues in their national regulatory framework. The jurisdictions were: Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Canada, China, Colombia, Ecuador, European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Greenland, Guinea, India, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, New Zealand, Peru, Philippines, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Korea, South Sudan, Suriname, Thailand, and Vietnam. From these countries, five were selected for detailed examination because their regulatory framework was considered to have at least some features of good practice: Australia, Canada, Colombia, India, and Thailand. To study their country systems, we used a mix of desk-top research and interviews (typically email exchanges) with key individuals working in these countries.

GOOD PRACTICES IN NATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORKS FOR SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

We established that good practice in national legal frameworks comprised regulatory consistency and institutional coordination, as well as mandatory requirements for: a broad range of social issues to be considered; public engagement and access to information; social impact mitigation and enhancement measures; and monitoring and enforcement. This was established from an analytical review of: (1) the SIA guidance document of the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) *Social Impact Assessment: Guidance for Assessing and Managing the Social Impacts of Projects* (Vanclay et al., 2015); (2) the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development (IGF) document, *Guidance for Governments: Improving Legal Frameworks for Environmental and Social Impact Assessment and Management* (IGF, 2020); and (3) our experience of the typical gaps (in comparison to international standards) that occur in the national regulatory systems of developing countries, which we gained from our work as social performance practitioners operating globally on private and public sector projects and working on behalf of proponents, governments, or lenders. Some highlights of the good practices are elaborated below.

Regulatory Consistency and Institutional Coordination

- Consistency is maintained across all legal instruments covering social issues at the national and subnational level.
- Responsible authorities are clearly identified along with their respective roles in Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) review, decision-making, and monitoring processes; include a coordinating/central agency to lead ESIA and social management plan (SMP) monitoring; and the legal framework clarifies the roles of all agencies and government departments in the ESIA review and monitoring process.
- There is a process of building the capacity of national and subnational agencies and government departments to review the social aspects of ESIA, undertake monitoring, and ensure compliance.

Consideration of Social Issues

- The legal framework requires a screening procedure to determine the level of ESIA that is to be applied, and which considers social impacts including on vulnerable people, disadvantaged groups, and women.
- The requirements and procedures for scoping social issues (determining the social components to be assessed in the ESIA) are explained, including adequate requirements for stakeholder input, and a requirement for a project response to stakeholder input.
- A clear legal mandate exists for the assessment to cover specific social issues, such as impacts associated with: community health and safety; occupational health and safety; working conditions; Indigenous people; resettlement and livelihood restoration; cultural heritage; and project-induced in-migration.
- There is a requirement to collect appropriate baseline data on the identified social components, including disaggregated data on vulnerable, disadvantaged groups and gender.

- A requirement is in place to identify opportunities for benefit-sharing with surrounding communities (beyond royalties and taxes).
- There is a requirement that, where substantial changes to the predicted social impacts are anticipated over time, an updated SIA would be demanded, including procedures for review and clearance.

Public Engagement and Access to Information

- The legal framework includes a process for identifying all potential issues and components of interest from all stakeholders, from government agencies to vulnerable groups, disadvantaged groups, local communities, and interest groups, e.g., NGOs.
- Requirements and guidelines (clarifying basic principles and procedures) for public engagement and consultation are provided, including requirements for ongoing public engagement throughout the project lifecycle.
- Where the interests of Indigenous peoples are affected, the requirements and guidelines are aligned with international instruments, such as the ILO Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (C169) or the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Requirements and guidelines exist regarding disclosure and access to environmental and social information, including: access to ESIA studies and management plans; how to provide input into ESIA and SMPs; criteria for government decision-making on permits and approvals; and about benefit-sharing agreements, e.g., use of funds by beneficiaries.

Mitigation and Enhancement Measures

- Management plans for social issues, including differentiated measures for vulnerable, disadvantaged groups and gender, are required for ESIA review.
- Management plans to enhance benefits to local communities are mandated.
- Requirements exist for local employment plans and local capacity building (e.g., to reduce the influx of workers from outside).
- Requirements exist for emergency preparedness plans (e.g., project incidents, pandemic, climate change related natural disasters, etc.) to cover surrounding communities.

Monitoring and Enforcement

- Proactive measures to promote compliance and clear sanctions for failure to implement SMPs and meet social performance commitments (e.g., no construction permit before resettlement is complete) are present.
- Oversight of social impacts across the project lifecycle is required in the form of monitoring, inspections, and enforcement. Relevant authorities at the national and subnational levels are sufficiently competent and resourced to conduct this oversight.
- Participatory monitoring mechanisms are required for the management of environmental and social (E&S) issues of greatest concern to affected communities.

EVALUATING COUNTRY SYSTEMS AGAINST GOOD PRACTICES FOR SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Regulatory Consistency and Institutional Coordination

Achieving consistency in regulation is made easier where there is a single agency responsible for administering the EIA system. Thailand's Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP) manages the EIA system and inter-ministerial coordination is clearly defined in the assessment and permitting processes. The EIA legislation is supported by clear prescriptive procedures, methodologies, and processes, including stakeholder engagement. Sector-specific legislation and regulations of licensing and permitting agencies set out rules for managing specific social issues, such as resettlement, occupational and community health and safety, and labour relations. Thailand's highly centralised EIA regulatory framework, however, reflects its history of centralisation in territorial organisation.

While a centralised system has its benefits, there are potential downsides when independence (of the regulator, as being separate from the government) and subsidiarity (the idea that decision-making should occur at the lowest level of governance that is appropriate) are constrained. Of the jurisdictions we looked at in detail, three promoted the principle of subsidiarity:

- *Canada*: While the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAA) is responsible for all federal impact assessment, it has a number of regulatory instruments to collaborate and coordinate with provincial, territorial, and Indigenous jurisdictions. Indigenous rights and interests have strong recognition in the impact assessment process, so impacts on Indigenous rights, including cultural rights, and the rights to self-determination, must be assessed (even if no environmental change occurs), as mandated by various laws at the federal level and in many provincial and territorial jurisdictions. Indigenous governing bodies are legally recognised as partners in the assessment, and Indigenous knowledge and law are incorporated into the assessment.
- *India*: Projects involving compulsory land acquisition for public purposes require a stand-alone SIA independent from applicable EIA processes. The final SIA report must be reviewed by the Multidisciplinary Expert Group, which comprises, in addition to social scientists and technical experts, representatives of local government.
- *Queensland, Australia (QLD)*: SIA covers potential cumulative impacts and the competent authority may establish cross-agency reference groups, formed by relevant state agencies and local governments, to assess cumulative impacts in concerned regions. These reference groups may be a venue for proponents and stakeholders to discuss proposed impact mitigation measures.

Independence is promoted in some Australian states, for example:

- *Western Australia (WA)*: The authority leading the EIA process (the Environmental Protection Authority) is an independent body that exerts its statutory functions without being subject to direction by the Government.
- *New South Wales, Australia (NSW)*: For projects raising public controversy, the authority to make the final decision is shifted from the Government (through the Minister for

Planning and Homes) and assigned to an independent body (the Independent Planning Commission).

Institutional coordination and interagency cooperation is a challenging issue in all countries. In Canada, various government departments take part in the federal impact assessment process by providing expertise, reviewing Impact Statements, and participating in monitoring on topics relevant to their respective mandates. However, the effectiveness of these government departments is limited by their capacity and lack of experience with the impact assessment process. In Thailand, EIA conditions are determined by a central agency (ONEP), but the monitoring of mitigation measures is delegated to the various permitting agencies. This arrangement leads to weak monitoring given that the permitting agencies lack capacity and motivation to monitor and enforce conditions imposed by another agency.

Coverage of Social Issues

Regulatory frameworks tend to emphasise those social issues that are the highest priority for affected communities and the highest risk for projects in each country. We found that the jurisdictions that had the broadest range of issues that had to be covered were Columbia, NSW (Australia), and Canada. In Colombia, recent standardisation led by the Minister of the Environment clarified and broadened the scope of social impacts that should be considered in ESIA, so that it now includes: demographic variables, community health and safety, occupational health and safety (OHS) issues, Indigenous communities, economic activities and livelihoods, infrastructure and public services, social well-being with a focus on vulnerable groups, cultural values and practices, visual perception of landscapes, archaeological heritage, local governance and institutions, among others.

In NSW, a new government guideline provides a comprehensive framework for SIA, covering community and way of life, including people's sense of place, health and well-being (including a focus on vulnerable people), public safety and security, aesthetic value and amenity, livelihoods, culture, including customs, practices and shared values, for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

In Canada, social aspects include gender, culture health, vulnerability, and economic issues. A specific methodology, Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+), is required at the federal level; integrated into the assessment are identity factors (gender, physical and mental ability, religion, ethnicity, etc.) and how these intersect with context and people's experiences of projects. GBA+ brings a human rights perspective to the assessment by stressing the rights of the most vulnerable and helps inform mitigation measures that address differential impacts. Some aspects such as working conditions and OHS are not covered by the impact assessment process; these are assessed and then monitored by permitting agencies as part of the licensing and permitting process.

Country systems worth highlighting for the emphasis given to specific social and human rights issues include:

- *France and Germany:* Human rights risks assessment is explicitly provided for as part of respective laws on human rights due diligence.
- *India:* SIA includes differential impacts of displacement experienced by vulnerable groups, e.g., women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Attention is given to addressing vulnerability and gender inequality. Women must be represented in certain

bodies involved in the SIA process, e.g., SIA team and Rehabilitation and Resettlement Committee (RRC). When consent from local self-governance institutions is needed to proceed with land acquisition, a minimum number of women at meetings is required.

- *Thailand*: Health impact assessment (HIA) is mandatory for projects with the most severe potential impacts on communities, and considers potential project impacts on physical, mental, and spiritual health, including of vulnerable groups.
- *Queensland (Australia)*: SIA includes factors rarely considered elsewhere, such as impacts on local housing, accommodation and labour market due to influx of migrant workers, and conditions of the project workforce, including OHS.
- *Finland*: There is a requirement for Indigenous knowledge-based IA.

Table 2.1 compares the regulatory frameworks of the five countries in terms of their coverage of various social risks, specifically community health and safety, OHS, working conditions, risks to Indigenous peoples, vulnerable people and gender, resettlement and livelihood restoration, cultural heritage, and project-induced in-migration.

Public Engagement and Access to Information

In the five countries, comprehensive public participation and information disclosure requirements are included for all phases of the IA. The following aspects are notable:

- *Canada*: Early public engagement in screening and scoping is emphasised. The Impact Assessment Act requires that the government provides funding and capacity building to the public and Indigenous groups to enable them to participate in the impact process effectively. Disclosure and information-sharing provisions are extensive.
- *Thailand*: The EHIA requires greater public participation than EIA during critical stages of the process, including public hearings, public reviews, and an assessment by the Independent Commission on Environment and Health. All EIA and EHIA information, including monitoring reports, is disclosed on a website accessible to the public.
- *WA*: Stakeholders can object to key decisions of the competent authority – such as the decision not to assess the project proposal or the merit of the final assessment report – by lodging a special appeal with an independent body (the Office of the Appeals Convenor).
- *NSW*: During the assessment or post-approval phase, a Community Consultative Committee (CCC) may be established to foster an ongoing dialogue between the proponent/developer and community representatives.

Requirements for Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) were identified in Canada, India, Colombia, Peru, Philippines, and Suriname. In India, projects involving land acquisition likely to affect tribal communities (living in Scheduled Areas) require prior consent. In Colombia, the process of prior consultation with Indigenous communities is integrated into the environmental licensing process through a formal mechanism involving the Ministry of the Interior. The presence of the Minister aims at guaranteeing the effective participation of the concerned community in the decision-making.

Whilst not strictly qualifying as FPIC, Australia has federal legislation on the participation of Indigenous communities in decision-making related to development projects in their traditional lands. The Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993 provides for the recognition and protection of Aboriginal native title, commonly including rights of possession, occu-

Table 2.1 Coverage of social risks across five country systems

Social risk area	Australia	Canada	Colombia	India	Thailand
Community health and safety	Covered by the ESIA process in NSW; the EIS process in QLD; and partly covered in the EIA process in WA.	Covered under the Impact Assessment Act (IAA), all aspects of health, differentiated impacts on vulnerable groups and Indigenous peoples, and determinants of health.	Included in the List of Specific Environmental Impacts issued by the Ministry of the Environment (includes a long list of disease categories to consider and road safety).	Covered by the Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act (LARR). Air and water pollution and noise are covered by EIA regulations. Under the Standardisation of Environment Clearance Conditions Notice 2019, some projects require emergency preparedness and disaster management plans.	Considered in the EIA. Mandatory requirements to integrate human health impacts in Environment and Health Impact Assessment (EHIA) cover risks to human health and livelihoods, effects on people's physical and mental well-being, health impacts on the way of life, etc.
Occupational health and safety	Covered by the EIS process in QLD. Not covered by the ESIA process in NSW (separate legislation); nor the EIA process in WA.	There is a separate Labour and OHS legislation. The issues are assessed and monitored as part of the permitting process (permits are industry specific, e.g., mine permits).	Included in the List of Specific Environmental Impacts issued by the Ministry of the Environment.	Not covered by the LARR Act. Under the Standardisation of Environment Clearance Conditions notice 2019, for some projects, specific OHS requirements are established. Separate Labour and OHS regulations exist for four sectors (manufacturing, mining, ports, and construction).	EIA and EHIAs require a worker health and safety assessment; with a more in-depth assessment in EHIA. The Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Act (2011) establishes comprehensive workforce health and safety requirements.
Working conditions	Covered by the EIS process in QLD. Not covered by the ESIA process in NSW; nor the EIA process in WA.	Covered under the Labour Code. A description of workforce and labour policies is required in Impact Statements.	Change in working conditions/labour market characteristics included in the List of Specific Environmental Impacts issued by the Ministry of the Environment and the licensing authority's (ANLA) General Methodology.	Not covered by the LARR Act. Under the EIA process, according to the Standardisation of Environment Clearance Conditions notice 2019, some projects are required to provide working conditions information (working hours, sanitary facilities, health care management services, etc.).	Not covered in the EIA, other than OHS. All other working conditions topics (e.g., pay, hours, leave, child labour, etc.), are covered in the Labour Law.

Social risk area	Australia	Canada	Colombia	India	Thailand
Indigenous peoples	Covered at the national level by the Native Title Act 1993. Covered by the ESIA process in NSW; not directly covered by the EIS process in QLD; nor in the EIA process in WA.	Comprehensive coverage of all aspects, including traditional knowledge, and Indigenous law; however, there are no requirements for Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).	Fully covered. A consultation process is incorporated into the environmental licensing process.	Under the LARR Act, land acquisition in areas with tribal populations can occur only as a last resort and prior consent is always needed. Further protection is provided by separate regulations.	No specific provision about impacts on Indigenous Peoples or FPIC exists in the EIA legislation. Thailand's Constitution and other government regulations do not recognise hill tribes or other minorities as Indigenous Peoples.
Vulnerable people & gender	Covered by the ESIA process in NSW; and the EIS process in QLD under community and stakeholder engagement. Not covered in the EIA process in WA.	Fully covered in the impact assessment legislation and include Gender-Based Analysis + requirements.	Impacts on the community must be assessed with a focus on vulnerable people. No comprehensive reference to gender (only specific issues such as domestic violence and prostitution rate).	The LARR Act covers differential impacts affecting vulnerable groups such as women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities.	No specific requirements for the assessment of vulnerable groups or gender.
Resettlement and livelihood restoration	Resettlement and compensation are regulated by the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act in QLD. Not expressly covered by the ESIA process in NSW; nor the EIA process in WA.	Resettlement is not covered. Livelihood restoration and land management are covered.	Resettlement is covered. Compensation and livelihood restoration are not covered.	Fully covered by the LARR Act.	Resettlement legislation focuses on expropriation and compensation. The emphasis is on generous monetary compensation and assistance packages over other mitigation measures. No specific livelihood restoration requirements.

Social risk area	Australia	Canada	Colombia	India	Thailand
Cultural heritage	Covered by the ESIA process in NSW; by the EIS process in QLD; and in the EIA process in WA.	Covered under IAA but more 'stones and bones' rather than intangible or natural features.	Fully covered by ANLA's General Methodology and List of Specific Environmental Impacts issued by the Ministry of the Environment.	Impacts on sites of religious and cultural meaning and impacts on norms, beliefs, values, and cultural life covered by the LARR Act.	Not included in the EIA legislation. The Act on Ancient Monuments, Antiques, Objects of Art and National Museums refers to the need to protect these cultural entities. No requirements for a 'chance find' procedure exists in the regulation.
Project induced in-migration	Covered by the ESIA process in NSW; by the EIS process in QLD; and not covered in the EIA process in WA.	Covered under IAA.	Potentially covered through the assessment of change in demographic variables and impacts on infrastructure and services.	Influx of migrant construction workforce covered by LARR Act.	EIA guidelines require the assessment of community impacts due to migration of people and workers, public area impacts, and potential conflicts.

Source: The authors, based on the sources listed at the end of this chapter.

pation, use, and enjoyment of traditional land. The legislation also establishes a mandatory agreement-making process for any future act on land or waters that would impact native title rights and interests of affected communities. Aboriginal representative bodies have been established in order to exert key responsibilities and functions relating to the protection and management of native rights and negotiations with third parties. Other good examples of how affected community participation is provided for in-country legislation include Argentina, Bangladesh, Ecuador, European Union, New Zealand, Peru, and Philippines.

Mitigation and Enhancement Measures

In the five selected countries, the adoption of mitigation measures was a common requirement, which occurred either through approval of the proponent's plans or by the relevant authority establishing approval conditions. However, benefit-sharing provisions were less common. The following systems are worthy of attention:

- *Queensland (Australia)*: Management measures identified through the SIA must be documented in a social impact management plan (SIMP). Proponents are also required to submit a workforce management plan including measures to enhance employment opportunities for local and regional communities and underrepresented groups (e.g., training) and prioritisation of local employment. A local business and industry procurement plan is also required, including procurement strategies for local and regional suppliers, Aboriginal-owned businesses, and programmes to build local and regional capacity.
- *Canada*: Impact assessments conducted under the federal regulatory framework require adaptive management, i.e., the requirement to adjust mitigation measures to new circumstances as the project progresses.
- *Colombia*: Social management measures are included in the Environmental Management Plan (EMP), which comprises a follow-up and monitoring plan to allow adjustments where necessary, an emergency preparedness plan, and an abandonment plan to guarantee sustainability post project. In the oil and gas sector, companies are required to define community development programmes (called PBCs, Plano de Beneficios Comunitarios).
- *India*: For projects involving land acquisition, preparation of the SIMP is mandatory, including a rehabilitation and resettlement scheme. India was the only identified country that legislates mitigation for loss of livelihoods, such as through financial assistance and employment offers.

A few country systems that had provisions for benefit-sharing were identified: Burkina Faso, China, Guinea, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Peru, Philippines, Sierra Leone, South Africa, and South Sudan.

Monitoring and Enforcement

In the selected countries, monitoring and enforcement provisions are common. However, the particular features are specific to each country system, in terms of authorities involved, monitoring and enforcement tools, or the consequences of non-compliance.

- *Colombia*: In case of non-compliance, the competent environmental authority at national and subnational levels has the power to enforce the conditions set by the licence and/or

impose additional measures to manage impacts not identified during the ESIA process. Legislation attributes sanctioning powers to the authority, including suspension of activities, fines, temporary or definitive closure of the project, and revocation of the environmental licence.

- *NSW, Australia:* Conditions of project approval may require establishing a Community Consultative Committee (CCC) formed by representatives of the community, who are to have a role in monitoring.
- *WA, Australia:* A proponent who fails to observe the Minister's notice to stop implementation of a project, in order to comply with the conditions of consent, commits an offence and can be prosecuted and sentenced to a monetary penalty.
- *Canada:* Monetary penalties are envisaged for non-compliance with impact assessment approval conditions. The regulation includes provisions for participatory monitoring, as well as federal funding to enable affected communities to undertake monitoring.
- *Greenland:* Provisions for Impact-Benefits Agreements between a company, municipality, and central government enable a municipality to negotiate measures for monitoring and enforcement. Agreement-making is also a feature in Guinea.

The provision for judicial remedy in France is also worth a mention. Private companies must submit a vigilance plan (which must be publicly available) that provides an overview of and explains the implementation of human rights risk mapping and evaluation procedures, and explains any mitigation action taken. Third parties may apply for an injunction to require a company to comply with the law and implement the vigilance plan, and to seek damages where the non-compliance has caused loss.

CONCLUSION

A number of good practices were identified through the research of country legislation aimed at managing social risks in private sector and public sector investment projects. Among Australia, Canada, Colombia, India, and Thailand, as well as the 28 jurisdictions considered, we found examples of good practice, including: regulatory consistency and institutional coordination; broad coverage of social issues; requirement for public engagement and access to information; and requirement that mitigation and enhancement measures be implemented. However, in the five countries we looked at closely, we found more weak than good practice, and we conclude that much is needed to strengthen country systems.

A high-level view is that national systems result from an interplay of multiple factors, such as historical backgrounds often dating back to colonial days, traditions in civic engagement, past and current political systems, the current political-economy landscape (including urgent needs for economic recovery), and the extent to which the country is integrated within international markets. This complexity explains why the development of national social risk management systems lags behind that of environmental systems in many countries. By articulating what is good practice in country systems, we hope that the research behind this chapter can contribute to the ongoing efforts of policymakers and practitioners to strengthen country systems.

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3. Certification of social impact assessment practitioners

Rachel Maas and Sheridan Coakes

INTRODUCTION: WHY CERTIFICATION?

Social impact assessment (SIA) documents, predicts, and manages the social impacts of large-scale projects and planned changes using a formalised set of practices and procedures (Esteves et al., 2012). SIA is defined in the *International Principles for Social Impact Assessment* (Vanclay, 2003, p. 6) as: ‘the processes of analysing, monitoring, and managing the intended and unintended social consequences, both positive and negative, of planned interventions (policies, programmes, plans, projects) and any social change processes invoked by those interventions.’ Over the years, SIA has grown to be an integral part of how companies, governments, and international banks fund, approve, undertake, and manage projects. SIA can be used to inform agreement making between companies and communities, it can be incorporated into company-wide environmental and social management systems, and it is expected to be undertaken by international financial institutions and Equator Principles banks (Vanclay et al., 2015; Vanclay, 2020).

The growth in requirements for SIA has been matched by a growing number of practitioners undertaking SIAs and who describe themselves as SIA practitioners. An SIA practitioner is someone who undertakes SIAs, and can come from a range of disciplines, but generally has mixed skills and experience (Social Practice Forum, 2020; Esteves & Moreira, 2021). The lack of prescription relating to qualifications and the experience required to carry out SIA has been detrimental to the practice and quality of work undertaken (du Pisani & Sandham, 2006; Baines et al., 2013). It has long been argued that a certification scheme for SIA practitioners would enhance the quality of SIAs.

Certification of SIA practitioners would distinguish those who possess the relevant and specialist skills, knowledge, and experience required to undertake good SIA practice. Certification provides the evidence that an SIA practitioner has met and maintains the pre-defined minimum standards established by a third-party organisation. Having a specialist certification for SIA differentiates and promotes SIA amongst other fields and acknowledges the ethical challenges that must be identified and addressed as part of good SIA practice. A certified SIA practitioner can articulate what good SIA practice looks like, and, given adequate resources (time, budget, and client support), can deliver quality SIA. Certification provides a level of assurance to proponents when comparing tenders and commissioning an SIA to be undertaken. For communities participating in an SIA, working with a certified SIA practitioner can provide a level of assurance knowing there is a third-party process to address any complaints or grievances associated with the SIA. Improved professional credibility and legitimacy can facilitate career pathways for emerging SIA practitioners, contribute to a stronger professional SIA community, and hence deliver a more effective field of practice. The intended outcome of SIA

certification is to raise the quality of SIA, enabling the facilitation of improved project design and planning, and more equitable and enhanced social outcomes.

This chapter discusses the drivers for SIA certification, describes the process undertaken to develop a certification scheme for SIA practitioners in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, and outlines the key components of the scheme.

DEFINING CERTIFICATION

Certification is a voluntary process by which an entity (usually a third-party non-government organisation) grants formal recognition to individuals or firms that meet predetermined criteria (ICE, 2020). The certification process involves the determination of eligibility, an assessment of demonstration of competence, and requirements for regular recertification. The existence of a common body of knowledge and procedures is a prerequisite for an effective certification scheme. SIA has a clearly defined body of knowledge on which certification may be based (Vanclay, 2020), as established by the *International Principles for Social Impact Assessment* (Vanclay, 2003) and the SIA Guidance of the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) (Vanclay et al., 2015).

Fothergill and Marshall (2019) found that the credibility of professional certification was based on a fundamental trust that a person who receives certification has proven they possess the required experience, knowledge, or skills of a particular profession or practice. This is paramount for the credential to maintain value for individual stakeholders, the profession, and the broader public. The research also identified that the primary underlying driver for certification across a variety of industry sectors, and why certification has found its way into almost every industry, is that it helps advance the profession.

Certification can be widely beneficial. For employers, it assists in: evaluating potential new hires and the performance of existing employees; selecting contractors; marketing services; and motivating employees to enhance their skills and knowledge. For proponents and government, it provides greater confidence that practitioners that authoring or signing off on work are competent and experienced. For the certified professional, there are benefits in: acknowledgement of their specific professional proficiencies; demonstrating a commitment to the profession and its future development; and facilitating further job advancement and career pathways. Communities participating in an SIA benefit from a means to report the SIA practitioner to a third-party organisation for any perceived breaches of ethics or inappropriate practice.

DRIVERS FOR CERTIFICATION

Driver 1: The Increasing Role of Social Impact Assessment in Planning and Decision-Making

SIA practice has changed and expanded over time (Vanclay, 2020). This is evident in the various guidelines that address what SIA is, and how it should be undertaken (e.g. Interorganizational Committee, 1994; Vanclay, 2003; Vanclay et al., 2015). The purpose and objectives of SIA are well understood and have not fundamentally changed over its 50-year history:

Social impact assessment is predicated on the notion that decision makers should understand the consequences of their decisions before they act, and that the people affected will not only be appraised of the effects, but have the opportunity to participate in designing their future. (Interorganizational Committee, 1994, pp. 148–149; cf. Vanclay, 2006)

In an international context, the requirement for SIA has been strongly driven by international banks requiring borrowers to assess the social risks associated with their projects, and various organisations have developed environmental and social performance standards (Vanclay & Hanna, 2019).

In Australia, the application of SIA has been driven either by international companies working to address their own internal standards and procedures, or by state or local governments responding to community and/or political pressure associated with large-scale and/or controversial policies and projects. Within different states, SIA units have been established, closed, and re-established over the years. In Queensland, despite an existing requirement for an SIA to be undertaken as part of Environmental Impact Assessments, communities in western and central Queensland still applied political pressure to emphasise the importance of assessing and managing social impacts appropriately. Consequently, the Queensland government introduced a Social Impact Assessment Management policy in 2010 and updated this in 2013. The need to undertake SIA in Queensland was cemented in legislation in 2017. In New South Wales (NSW), the then Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Environment developed an SIA Guideline for state-significant mining, petroleum production, and extractive industry development in 2017. In 2021, the Guideline was updated so it could be applied to all state-significant projects (DPIE, 2021). The 2017 Guideline was used by the NSW Land and Environment Court as the framework to assess social impacts, setting a legal precedent for greater consideration of social impacts in project development. Other NSW government agencies are also taking an interest in developing socio-economic guidance for other sectors.

Within Aotearoa New Zealand, the practice of SIA has also evolved, with practitioners (see chapters 12–14) contributing to much of the early work in the SIA field. In 1985, the Town and Country Planning Directorate of the Ministry of Works published an SIA guideline entitled *Social Impact Assessment in New Zealand: A Practical Approach* (Conland, 1985; Taylor & Mackay, 2016). The Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency developed an SIA Guideline in 2016. This guide applies a consistent approach to the management of social impacts across transport projects, providing greater certainty, establishing SIA as good practice within project delivery processes, reducing project risk, and delivering on a commitment to social responsibility and social outcomes. There is a trend in Aotearoa New Zealand for SIA to identify local and regional social outcomes that can be achieved through project implementation, during both construction and operation. The Pacific Network for Environmental Assessment recently released a Social Impact Assessment Guideline (Taylor & Mackay, 2022). It was written for community members to facilitate an improved understanding of SIA, including how to conduct an SIA and determine what's fit for purpose, how key stakeholders and communities can contribute to the SIA programme, and how SIA results are utilised to inform decision-making.

Driver 2: A Call for Suitably Qualified SIA Practitioners

Charlie Wolf (1974, p. 18) called for SIAs to be undertaken by social scientists, believing that, 'For the short term, SIA appears fated to remain the intellectual property of non-experts.'

Disappointingly, some 50 years on, it could be argued that nothing has changed, even though there are international publications and guidelines advocating for social scientists to undertake SIAs and the associated benefits of doing so. The benefits were identified as: (1) ensuring the best and most appropriate methods are used in SIA; (2) ensuring rigour of SIA data collection and analysis and legally defensible results; and (3) increasing the integrity of the SIA process (Interorganizational Committee, 2003).

The International Principles for SIA (Vanclay, 2003, p.7) advocated that: ‘An important feature of SIA is the professional value system held by its practitioners. In addition to a commitment to sustainability and to scientific integrity, such a value system includes an ethic that advocates openness and accountability, fairness and equity, and defends human rights.’ Expanding on the International Principles, the 2015 IAIA guidance on SIA (Vanclay et al., 2015, p. 53) also stated: ‘It goes without saying that the SIA should only be undertaken by appropriately qualified social specialists (anthropologists, community psychologists, geographers, sociologists, social workers, health practitioners, etc.) who have training in SIA.’

Driver 3: Separating Social from the Environment

An ongoing debate has been whether to combine or separate social and environmental aspects in impact assessment (Barrow, 2000; Burdge, 2003; du Pisani & Sandham, 2006). The concept of ‘environment’ has evolved from only the biophysical components to include the socio-cultural, socio-economic, heritage, and visual components (Vanclay, 2004). For example, the IAIA (2009, p. 1) defines Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as ‘the process of identifying, predicting, evaluating and mitigating the biophysical, social, and other relevant effects of development proposals prior to major decisions being taken and commitments made.’

While advances in the theory and practice of SIA are evident since the 1970s, SIA has largely evolved in the shadow of EIA. Burdge (2002) described SIA as an ‘orphan’ that has not been fully adopted by the assessment process for environmental and natural resource decision-making. Within the SIA field, there is a well-developed understanding of social impacts and how they are experienced (Vanclay, 2002, 2012; Smyth & Vanclay, 2017), as well as how SIA should be undertaken (Esteves et al., 2012, 2017; Vanclay et al., 2015). Unlike biophysical impacts, which arguably only happen when construction commences, social impacts occur the moment there are rumours of a potential project within the community (Vanclay, 2012, 2020).

In some countries (e.g. Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and the United States), there is a growing distinction between EIA and SIA, although in these countries, the biophysical footprint is still usually the dominant factor (du Pisani & Sandham, 2006). As Parsons (2020) noted, climate change and extinction crises, the inexorable widening of inequalities, and the contemporary distrust of science, all pose substantial challenges for impact assessment. However, for SIA they offer an opportunity to reclaim core principles and to work towards a greater community voice, equality, inclusion, social well-being, and sustainable social development.

By separating and acknowledging the qualifications, skills, and experience required to carry out an SIA, and implement appropriate social impact management and monitoring strategies, there is a greater opportunity to deliver improved project decision-making, design, and outcomes, that fairly consider both the environmental and social costs and benefits of develop-

ment, and which enable appropriate strategies to be put in place to manage (avoid, mitigate, and enhance) these impacts effectively.

Driver 4: Acknowledging and Removing Bias

Various authors (O’Faircheallaigh, 1999; du Pisani & Sandham, 2006; Baines et al., 2013) have recognised the complex nature of SIA. When an SIA is being undertaken as part of a government or international bank approval process, e.g. as a technical study for an EIA, there can be a conflict of interest that needs to be recognised, acknowledged, and managed. The intended purpose of EIA/SIA is to provide an impartial assessment of potential impacts, offering a scientifically reasonable assessment in advance of the proposed action, not to achieve the relevant approvals for the action to occur. If roles become blurred, the principles of EIA and SIA may become compromised.

The basic principles of impact assessment include being impartial, objective, and transparent (IAIA, 1999; Vanclay, 2003). These principles are critical, as the purpose of the EIA and SIA is to present the potential impacts of the project and how such impacts may be managed and monitored credibly and transparently, should the project be approved. It is not the purpose of the SIA to promote or prevent the project from proceeding by presenting a biased view of the impacts (Burdge, 2003). Smyth (2021) discusses this issue of bias, outlining that while independence is a central theme within the IAIA’s code of conduct, there appears little consensus on what this means. Morris (2019), in an opening plenary at IAIA’19, also raised the issue of bias in impact assessment, proposing four solutions: independent panels; consultant statements of compliance with best practice; third-party merit reviews; and mandatory SIA to place cultural considerations and the independent voices of affected communities at the heart of impact assessment. These practices are critical to develop community trust in the SIA process and ensure that a professional standard in SIA practice is maintained. A rigorous and impartial certification for SIA practitioners may assist in assessing the relevant experience, skills, and ethical conduct of social professionals, providing a greater degree of confidence to the community, government, and industry in the assessment process.

Driver 5: Increasing the Quality of SIA Practice

Professional associations, such as IAIA, outline the key principles of good practice (Vanclay, 2003; Vanclay et al., 2015). However, there is no standard to define what is an acceptable level of quality, with the determination of ‘quality’ usually being left to the judgement of a proponent or regulator, many of whom have no SIA qualifications or experience. The ‘benchmark’ against which to judge an SIA is also changing, with recent SIAs including greater consideration of human rights, climate change, and gender impacts (Esteves et al., 2017; Vanclay, 2020). There is also a need for a greater focus on methodology and the research process, with increasing concern about research ethics, scientific integrity, and the security of personal data (Vanclay et al., 2013). Any constraints on the quality of the SIA and the outcomes that could be achieved (e.g. time, budget, restrictions on engagement with SIA stakeholders) should be acknowledged in the SIA report (Baines et al., 2013). While all social researchers should always implement ethical practice, there are times when practitioners may experience difficulties in undertaking their work, including feeling compromised in the reporting of SIA outcomes (Baines et al., 2013).

Consequently, with the absence of a benchmark for a ‘good’ SIA, the quality of the SIA undertaken is highly dependent upon the practitioner undertaking the work (whether they have relevant social qualifications, skills, and experience), appreciation of the value that SIA can contribute to planning and decision-making within the broader project team, the commitment of the proponent/client to best practice, and appreciation of SIA by the approving authority or regulator. Given the number of stakeholders involved in an SIA, even with relevant qualifications, SIA practitioners may struggle to undertake quality practice given such constraints.

Driver 6: Counteracting an ‘Asocietal’ Approach

Rarely is SIA a legislated requirement. SIA is more likely to be used in response to wider requirements relating to environmental legislation, policy, or planning, or because of the proponent’s commitment to international standards or awareness that it is a community expectation (Vanclay & Hanna, 2019). Generally, the potential usefulness of SIA is implicit in legislative mandates through indirect references, e.g. where the definition of environment includes people and communities (Vanclay, 2004). Where SIA is implicitly rather than explicitly required, its use is often determined by individuals in other professions, such as lawyers, planners, and project managers, who may only have a partial understanding of SIA, how it should be conducted, and potentially limited understanding of the ethical issues associated with it, and who may act in a gatekeeping role on behalf of agencies or proponents (Baines et al., 2013).

Burdge and Vanclay (1996) outlined the ‘*asocietal mentality*’ that exists among all ranks of regulatory agencies, corporations, politicians, public officials, engineers, economists, and some planners. This is an attitude that humans don’t count and that social issues are vague and unimportant. People with such a mindset generally are less sensitive to social processes, with little understanding of the complexity and heterogeneity of society, and of how the impacts of development benefit and disadvantage different sections of society in different ways. Manifestations of an asocietal mentality include interpreting people’s beliefs about how they are impacted as only perception and not fact, and arguing that social impacts cannot be quantified or rated given the subjectivity relating to social data (Moreira et al., 2022). There are those who question its cost-effectiveness, or who may be afraid that it will lead to delays or even the abandonment of development projects (Barrow, 2000). An asocietal mentality may result in social impacts being overlooked, the recommendations of an SIA not being considered, the need for specialised expertise to undertake SIA not recognised, or to only very minimal expectations regarding SIA practice, e.g. only superficial social baseline information required, or a lack of engagement of key stakeholders as part of an SIA process. Having a certification scheme for SIA professionals that raises the profile of the field and its value will assist in countering this asocietal mentality.

Driver 7: A Lack of Specialist Recognition

SIAs are generally undertaken by persons trained in a variety of environmental and social sciences (Barrow, 2000). In some cases, SIAs are undertaken by practitioners with no formal social science training, but qualifications in economics, communications, planning, or the arts. Research undertaken in various contexts shows that social science staffing in consultancies and government remains below adequate levels to provide the necessary expertise to conduct

SIA, and assessment of social aspects is often undertaken by non-specialists (du Pisani & Sandham, 2006; Munday, 2021).

SIA relies on the use of social research methods and is fundamentally about people, therefore a strong commitment to social research ethics is essential for all SIA practice (Vanclay et al., 2013). Ethics associated with social research methods is a key differentiator between SIA and the other sciences. A lack of recognition of the specialist nature of SIA often begins at the commencement of the EIA process. It is in the scoping phase where the importance of social impacts or social risks to project approval is identified. In some SIA guidelines, a ‘suitably qualified’ SIA practitioner is only required for ‘more complex’ projects or once a particular point in the project approval process has been reached. If the proponent, the EIA manager, and their team do not have the necessary expertise to fully understand social impacts or how a project can differentially impact ‘the community’, they may not recognise the need for an SIA to be undertaken in the first place. People don’t know what they don’t know.

Driver 8: The Multi-Specialisation of Social Impact Assessment

Practitioners working in SIA are often drawn from a range of social sciences and other disciplines, each bringing their disciplinary expertise to the assessment process, including human geography, anthropology, political science, sociology, psychology, international development, community development, planning, environmental science/management, engineering, communications, commerce, and economics. For instance, a practitioner with a background in demography may have strengths in working with population data, an anthropologist may bring expertise in understanding different cultural groups and connections, a lawyer may offer capability in the assessment of human rights, while a psychologist may have competencies to engage and work with different stakeholders. Often a single SIA practitioner or a small SIA team is required to undertake a full SIA with little recognition of the many differing components of SIA practice requiring them to have generalisation of skills when, in comparison, EIA relies on the inputs of many environmental scientists with varying specialisms.

Driver 9: Managing Stakeholder Expectations

SIA practitioners are required to manage the expectations of many stakeholder groups with each having varying perspectives within them. Stakeholder groups include local affected communities, government, and the client/proponent. Stakeholders have their own expectations of what SIA should deliver, which influences how they will judge the SIA. For example, a client may expect that an SIA will improve their chances of gaining development approval for their project. They may also feel that an SIA should be done more quickly or more cheaply. A regulator expects the SIA to meet the relevant laws and/or guidelines relevant to their jurisdiction. Impacted communities expect to have an adequate voice in the process and reassurance that any significant social impacts will have appropriate management strategies and measures in place to mitigate or enhance social impacts, should the project be approved. Also, depending upon personal circumstance and their level of interest in the project, and/or the magnitude of impacts that may be experienced, community stakeholders may be more, or less, supportive of a project. Lastly, the SIA practitioner will need to work closely with the EIA consultant and other specialists to ensure that the outcomes of the SIA and EIA are effectively integrated and considered to inform the planning and assessment process. Consequently, managing the

differing perspectives of multiple stakeholder groups and being clear about what an SIA can and cannot deliver is a key competency required of SIA practitioners.

Baines et al. (2013) outlined that the size and focus of an SIA are key aspects that SIA practitioners need to manage, with SIA programmes undertaken to meet client/proponent and regulatory timeframes and deliverable expectations. The NSW SIA guideline outlined that an SIA should be no longer than 100 pages in length. While an encyclopaedic approach to SIA may take too much time and may produce unwieldy results (Taylor et al., 2004), if the focus of an assessment is too narrow and limited, the quality of the SIA may be prejudiced. Taylor et al. (2004) suggested that SIAs need to be useful to decision-makers (industry, but particularly government) and focused on impacts of relevance and significance. What is apparent is that implementing SIA requires a level of professional judgement, an ability to work effectively with a range of stakeholders, and the ability to deliver effective social/community outcomes while also navigating project and process constraints and ethics. Certification is likely to assist in highlighting the proficiencies required to ensure the delivery of quality SIA.

Driver 10: Adequacy of Briefs and the Competitive Nature of Consulting

SIA is often undertaken as part of a broader EIA process, and the scope of these studies is frequently determined by the proponent in preparing specialist briefs (and terms of reference) for a project. Where an SIA is required, the proponent will usually base the brief on their interpretation of international bank/lender or government guidelines or internal company standards and policies. While some proponents will engage environmental and social consultants to develop specialist study briefs, this is not always the case. Consequently, the breadth and quality of an SIA is dependent upon the expertise of those developing the brief. For instance, a proponent may recognise the need for an SIA, but may interpret the requirement in a narrow way, e.g. only requiring a desktop assessment based on secondary data from third-party sources such as Census data or engagement already undertaken. The SIA practitioner may interpret the requirement in a broader way, requiring primary research to identify impacts and develop appropriate management and monitoring plans. The extent of stakeholder participation has a considerable bearing on the cost of SIA, as does provision for professional peer or expert review; and this can result in considerable compromises in the extent and quality of SIAs (Baines et al., 2013).

Ethical dilemmas can arise from having a limited range of research methods because of financial and time constraints. Additional financial costs to clients for good practice can be a concern to proponents, who may not appreciate the cost of not undertaking a quality SIA (e.g. the potential failure to get project approval). SIA practitioners are frequently challenged to work under tight financial and time constraints. With the increasing need for SIA to be included in planning and decision-making, particularly as a component of a project assessment processes, there is an increasing number of people providing SIA services, including many individuals and companies prepared to claim SIA expertise, despite not having the relevant social training, skills, knowledge, and experience in the social domain (Baines et al., 2013). Vanclay (2020) referred to these individuals as '*charlatans*', masquerading as responsible professionals, undertaking deeply flawed social research in support of harmful projects. This may include naïve or inexperienced practitioners who have become involved in risky projects, without full knowledge and/or comprehension of all relevant issues. Some practitioners may tender for projects far too cheaply and are thus unable to undertake all the work necessary

to constitute an adequate assessment of a project's social impacts. Typically, the timeframes expected by companies to undertake SIA are too short to afford effective engagement and assessment, resulting in a lack of meaningful engagement and opportunity for local people to fully comprehend a project and its potential impacts. Conversely, practitioners who tender for projects with a methodology that would ensure effective engagement and assessment may be 'overpriced' or take too long, which will lead to them being unsuccessful in winning the work. There is a practical real-life balance for SIA practitioners to manage: undertaking SIA work in an ethical way while still remaining employed and being paid.

Determining whether constraints on the time and financial resources available to an SIA practitioner render the SIA inadequate is not easy, as there are no objective measures for determining the minimum approach necessary for good practice, or to determine when the line between ethical and unethical practice is crossed. Furthermore, in an unlegislated and unregulated environment, those who aim for good practice face the additional ethical challenge that, if they decide not to undertake an SIA because of inadequate resourcing, there may be no SIA carried out at all, or a superficial SIA may be conducted by someone with inadequate experience or less scrupulous intentions. Under such circumstances, it may be preferable to attempt a constrained SIA, documenting the limitations encountered (Baines et al., 2013).

Driver 11: Achieving Expected Standards

As previously discussed, SIA practitioners are compelled by a set of principles and ethics. This integrity and aspiration to ensure that projects appropriately address social issues and negative impacts and enhance social outcomes lies at the heart of SIA practice. As noted by Vanclay (2020, p. 129):

It is essential that SIA practitioners ensure that, when they agree to participate in projects, they are adequately resourced to properly assess the issues, have sufficient influence within project management to make a difference, and there is a commitment by the project to fully addressing all identified social issues. To have influence within the project and company demands that SIA practitioners be effective communicators and know how to pitch their arguments in defence of local communities in ways that resonate inside the project and company. SIA practitioners need to be stronger advocates for the value of SIA. They need to speak up more, and/or refuse to participate in projects that are likely to cause harm and suffering. Only when all professional SIA practitioners stand up to defend good practice SIA will the lives of project-affected communities be improved and projects truly obtain a social licence to operate.

While it is acknowledged that the effectiveness of SIA rests largely on the experience and integrity of the SIA practitioner, SIA practitioners may at times be compromised in their ability to deliver best practice SIA, given project and client constraints. The additional costs to clients associated with good practice requirements are a frequent bone of contention for SIA practitioners (Baines et al., 2013). As with many elements of planning and impact assessment, SIA practitioners are frequently challenged by public and private sector clients to work under tight financial constraints, which may compromise and limit good practice and create an ethical dilemma for SIA practitioners in undertaking their work.

Driver 12: The Lack of University Training and Professional Membership for SIA Practitioners

There is no ‘Bachelor of SIA.’ Around the world, there are only a few masters programmes that offer a course on SIA or professional development courses, including an online course offered by the Community Insights Group together with the University of Strathclyde. While the International Association for Impact Assessment has been very supportive and inclusive of SIA as a component of impact assessment broadly, there are limited professional organisations specific to SIA practitioners at a national level. The Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand (EIANZ) developed an SIA working group, now referred to as the SIA Community of Practice (COP), based on feedback at the Impact Assessment Symposium in 2017. The establishment of the SIA COP was also the catalyst for the development of the SIA certification scheme further detailed in this chapter.

Many of Australia’s and Aotearoa New Zealand’s second generation of SIA practitioners have learned their practice ‘on the job’, usually drawing on the works of the forebears of SIA, such as Alan Dale, Ciaran O’Faircheallaigh, Di Buchan, Donna Craig, Frank Vanclay, Geoff Syme, Helen Ross, James Baines, Marcus Lane, Nick Taylor, Ritchie Howitt, and Roy Rickson, who have provided a strong and sound theoretical basis for SIA practice and a robust set of social research proficiencies. These are subsequently being passed on to third-generation SIA practitioners entering the field.

Given the growing concern relating to environmental challenges, further focus and attention on the social aspects of development is likely to foster the development and growth of relevant academic courses in SIA. There is a renewed interest in Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) factors, with businesses and investors increasingly applying these non-financial factors as part of their due diligence and analysis process to identify material risks and growth opportunities, which also provides the opportunity to showcase the ‘social’ aspect.

EXISTING CERTIFICATION SCHEMES AROUND THE WORLD

Over the years, there have been numerous calls for the development of minimum standards, registration, and/or certification of SIA practitioners with some of the loudest appeals coming from SIA practitioners themselves (Barrow, 2000; du Pisani & Sandham, 2006; Baines et al., 2013; Munday, 2021). This section considers the options available to SIA practitioners to gain certification. Our search for existing country-based certification schemes for SIA practitioners focused on existing environmental certification schemes. We found environmental certification schemes in Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, Canada, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and South Africa, but there was no operating certification programme specifically for SIA practitioners (see Table 3.1). The Environmental Assessment Practitioners Association of South Africa is in the process of developing a certification scheme for SIA and some schemes mention ‘social’ in the context of required competencies; consequently SIA practitioners with relevant skills and experience may be able to be certified by these organisations.

Table 3.1 *Environmental practitioner certification schemes*

Country	Certification	Certifying organisation	SIA specialisation
Australia/Aotearoa	Certified Environmental Practitioner (CEnvP)	Certified Environmental Professional Scheme https://www.cenvp.org/	Established in 2022
New Zealand	Certified Environmental Professional (CEP)	Academy of Board Certified Environmental Professionals https://www.abcep.org/	No
United States of America	Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP)	Board for Global EHS Credentialing https://gobgc.org/	No
United States of America	Canadian Certified Environmental Practitioner (CCEP)	Canadian Environmental Certification Approvals Board	No
United Kingdom	Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv)	Society for the Environment https://socenv.org.uk/	No
South Africa	Environmental Assessment Practitioners (EAP)	Environmental Assessment Practitioners Association of South Africa https://eapasa.org/	Under development

DEVELOPING A SPECIALIST SIA CERTIFICATION FOR AUSTRALIA AND AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

Background

In 2017, the EIANZ established an SIA Working Group, now known as a Community of Practice, based on the feedback from the 2017 EIANZ annual conference. The SIA COP contributes to the EIANZ with practical information on SIA, holds events, workshops, conference sessions, and online training, makes submissions on SIA guidelines, raises the profile of SIA within the EIANZ and beyond, and educates other professionals on the contribution of SIA to impact assessment and project planning. The EIANZ SIA COP has a membership of approximately 75 practitioners with a range of interests and experience in SIA.

The EIANZ SIA COP facilitated a session on developing SIA practitioners at IAIA's Brisbane conference in 2019, with SIA practitioners from around the globe. The desire for specialist certification in SIA was raised again, with an action taken to explore a possible 'home' for such a scheme. Further discussion among SIA practitioners at a topic-specific workshop preceding the EIANZ conference in Adelaide in 2019 confirmed the need for action around certification, with the Certified Environmental Practitioner Scheme (CEnvP) mooted as a potential organisation to facilitate development. A survey of members of the EIANZ SIA COP in 2020 indicated strong support for certification, with 79 per cent of SIA practitioners sampled (n=63) indicating that they would be supportive of the development of a certification scheme for SIA practitioners; and 75 per cent indicating that they would pursue certification if such a scheme was available. The practitioners surveyed were very supportive of improving SIA practice, increasing equity in development and sustainable outcomes, facilitating improved integration of SIA with EIA, and raising the profile of SIA generally.

After reviewing a number of organisations, the SIA COP decided on the CEnvP, because it provided a neutral and relevant home, given the connection between SIA and EIA; and because of the existing establishment of CEnvP as an independent national certification body, and its activity in developing other certifications in general and more specialised environmental practice. After discussions with CEnvP, in 2021 the CEnvP Board decided to develop the specialist certification. The SIA Specialist Environmental Advisory Committee (SIA SEAC)

was established to guide the development of the certification. The SIA SEAC included international and country-based SIA practitioners from Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

It is also important to recognise that there are other organisations that have established their own social performance and social planning schemes. These include the Australian Institute of Mining and Minerals, which commenced development of its Social Performance Chartered Professional discipline for its members in 2020; and the Planning Institute of Australia, which has also expressed interest in developing a certification programme in SIA.

About the Certified Environmental Practitioner Scheme (CEnvP)

The CEnvP (<https://www.cenvp.org>) was established in 2004 by EIANZ (<https://www.eianz.org>), although it acts independently as a certification body. The CEnvP Scheme is based on the 17024:2012 standard of the International Organization for Standardization, *Conformity Assessment: General Requirements for Bodies Operating Certification of Persons*. The CEnvP Scheme is supported by governance arrangements including a Certification Board, an Appeals Process, and a third-party complaint process to ensure the scheme remains effective and fair.

Among the key requirements of 17024:2012 are that certification must be available to anyone who meets specified criteria, not just those who belong to a particular institute or association; and that the scheme's governance is independent of other organisations. Compliance of the CEnvP Scheme with ISO17024 is assured by EIANZ By-law 16 and is regularly audited. By-law 16 also specifies that CEnvPs have strong governance and must abide by the EIANZ-CEnvP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. CEnvP has clear operational policies, procedures, and complaints handling. The CEnvP Scheme has robust processes in place for endorsing a professional as being suitably qualified and competent before their certification. A CEnvP is also required to undertake and provide evidence of continued professional development.

Establishing the CEnvP SIA Specialist Certification

CEnvP has a predetermined process of establishing a new specialised certification. The first step is the establishment of a Specialized Environmental Advisory Committee (SEAC), whose role is to develop the standards SIA practitioners must meet to be certified, as well as develop the process and materials for certification. The SIA SEAC comprised SIA practitioners from Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, with experience working in professional services/consulting, government, academia, and industry. The committee was charged with achieving the right balance in setting high enough standards for SIA certification to have credibility, and to develop a standard SIA practitioners could realistically meet, without being too exclusive or unattainable. Early in the SIA SEAC process, the committee determined that target participants for SIA certification included: existing experienced practitioners seeking certification; existing practitioners looking to gain certification in the future; and students and potential SIA practitioners considering a career in SIA.

There has been a strong emphasis in SEAC discussions on the need to provide a career pathway for junior SIA practitioners (see Box 3.1). Given the variable adoption of SIA in traditional planning and development processes by industry and government in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, it was suggested that the certification scheme needed to be inclusive and recognise social professionals working in consulting services, government, industry,

academia, and not-for-profit sectors. In developing the specialist certification, the CEnvP programme office provided expert guidance on the standards and processes required to meet scheme requirements; with the SIA SEAC also undertaking survey research with SIA practitioners in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand to inform certification development about qualifications, experience, and proficiencies.

The SIA SEAC has met monthly since its inception in 2021 to develop relevant materials to support the establishment of a certification scheme for SIA practitioners, with SIA guidance notes and requirements documentation, and nominations for two SIA Registrars provided to the CEnvP Board for their feedback and subsequent approval in June 2022.

Defining Social Impact Assessment in the CEnvP Scheme

The understanding of SIA as outlined in the *International Principles for Social Impact Assessment* (Vanclay et al., 2015, p. iv) was used for the CEnvP scheme: ‘Social Impact Assessment (SIA) is now conceived as being the process of identifying and managing the social issues of project development and includes the effective engagement of affected communities in participatory processes of identification, assessment and management of social impacts.’ This definition is well recognised and widely accepted and is reflected in many guidelines relating to SIA practice. The scheme also uses the term ‘Social Practice’, which is akin to ‘Environmental Practice’ in other certification schemes. Social Practice was defined to include those working in planning and development contexts nationally and internationally in the areas of SIA, community and stakeholder engagement, social research, and social performance, a term frequently used for social specialists working in the resources sector.

BOX 3.1 SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF THE CENVP SCHEME

Eligibility – qualifications and years of experience

The requirement for applicants to hold a social science or related degree has been adopted as a general minimum requirement for certification. Disciplines from which applicants may be drawn have been noted and encompass a range of social science-related disciplines. Applicants with environmental degrees are also considered eligible, providing they can demonstrate substantial experience in SIA and/or postgraduate qualifications in social research. An emphasis on social research is also reflected strongly in the proficiencies developed as a requirement for SIA certification. The SIA SEAC spent considerable time discussing the importance of practitioners having social research experience, given the need for greater rigour in social practice and the complexities of integrating multiple perspectives/viewpoints and data sources in SIA programmes. In line with other CEnvP certification schemes, the SEAC has adopted similar experience timeframes arriving at 10 years of full-time equivalent experience in social practice during the last 17 years (to account for those who have worked part time or who may have taken a break in their careers, etc.), with a minimum of 5 years’ SIA-specific experience, supported by documentary evidence such as reports or other publications. There was much debate within the committee around the number of years of specific experience required, with the SEAC not wanting to limit appli-

cations by being too restrictive, i.e. 8 or 10 years, thus arriving at the 5-year specification. Given the outcomes of the SIA practitioner surveys, undertaken to inform certification development, this opens eligibility for SIA certification to a reasonably sized group of current SIA practitioners. Other evidence required to be provided by applicants is consistent with other certification programmes, e.g. referee statements, CV, reports, accompanying statements, essays, publications, citations, conference/presentations, etc.

Proficiencies

Proficiencies have been identified across three main categories, which address:

1. Application of SIA
2. Social Research Methods
3. Interpersonal and Engagement Skills

The first category articulates the need for applicants to demonstrate an understanding of SIA practice, a respect for the objectives, values, and principles that guide SIA, and its key phases. There is also an emphasis on the outcomes that good SIA should seek to achieve, recognising some of the challenges that may be experienced by practitioners in this regard. Demonstration of the SIA practitioner's role in ensuring that SIA processes are transparent, that they facilitate meaningful involvement of key stakeholders and communities, and that the outcomes of assessments have integrity and realise and enhance positive social/community outcomes need to be provided and discussed. The need for knowledge of relevant regulatory frameworks, guidelines, and reporting requirements within the jurisdictions in which the SIA is being undertaken and awareness of emerging issues and trends in the SIA space, nationally and internationally, were also noted.

The second category focuses on the nuts-and-bolts type of knowledge of social science research methods, foundations, and ethics (impartiality, inclusivity, transparency, etc.). There is also an emphasis on the integration of local knowledge, including traditional and indigenous knowledge to support SIA, and being cognizant of the need for stakeholder perspectives to be reflected and incorporated in SIA programmes. Understanding of varying industry, project, and policy contexts is also highlighted.

The final proficiency category emphasises the importance of participatory SIA and the skills required to listen, understand, reflect, and report on social impacts, as well as work collaboratively with key stakeholders to develop appropriate social impact management and enhancement strategies, promoting greater accountability in SIA through transparent and meaningful participation. Subsequent meetings of the SEAC focused on the development of materials to support the application process for certification, and once the certification is launched, Certification Panel members will comprise SIA SEAC members in the first year of the certification's launch.

Source: Summarised from CEnvP (2022).

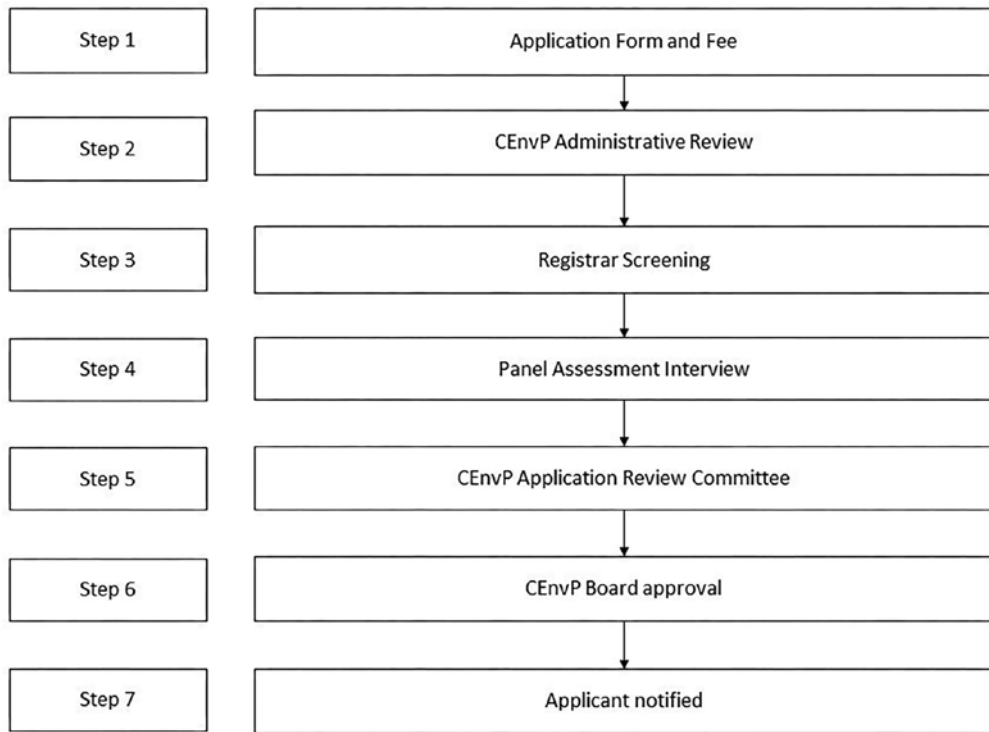


Figure 3.1 CEnvP SIA certification process

The Process of Applying for Certification

Figure 3.1 summarises the process of applying for an applicant seeking specialist SIA certification and the steps are described below.

Step 1 – Application form and fee: Complete the application form and demonstrate years of experience, qualifications, and key proficiencies through the provision of relevant reports and essay responses.

Step 2 – CEnvP administrative review: Once the application has been submitted and the fee paid, CEnvP staff review the application for completeness and follow up with the applicant for any missing information.

Step 3 – Registrar screening: Once the application has passed through CEnvP review, it is passed to the CEnvP SIA Registrar to review. The Registrar, appointed by the SIA SEAC, will assess the information provided by the applicant and verify that the applicant has demonstrated the knowledge, skills, and experience for the applicable certification. The Registrar determines whether an application has been properly made and may request additional information if required. There is no right of appeal against the Registrar’s decision.

Step 4 – Panel assessment interview: If the applicant proceeds to the interview stage, CEnvP will establish a panel of three SIA Certified Practitioners. Until there are enough SIA Certified Practitioners to form an interview panel, the SEAC will act as interim interview panel members. At the assessment interview, applicants will be asked questions relating to

experience, competence, commitment to continuous professional development, and ethical conduct. Following the interview, the panel will recommend acceptance, deferral, or rejection of the application to the CEnvP Certification Board.

Step 5 – CEnvP Application Review Committee: The Board Application Review Committee will review both the application and Assessment Panel Reports in detail before making a formal recommendation to the Certification Board.

Step 6 – CEnvP Certification Board approval: The Certification Board will then ratify the decision or otherwise and advise the applicant regarding the outcome of the application.

Step 7 – Applicant notified: Applicants will then be notified as to the outcome of their application. Successful applicants will receive a CEnvP certificate and a personalised CEnvP SIA Certification logo to use. Unsuccessful applications can either have their application deferred for a period no longer than 12 months or rejected. Unsuccessful applicants will receive an outcome letter from the Board addressing their decision and shortcomings identified during the application process. Applicants can either accept the decision of the Board or appeal through the appeals process.

Recertification: Certification is reviewed on a two-year basis. To maintain CEnvP status, certified practitioners are required to provide evidence they have met specified Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements and a statement verifying any changed circumstances including employment and ethical conduct.

Evaluation of CEnvP SIA Certification

Recognition of the SIA certification will likely increase over time, although no prediction is made on whether it will be a mandatory requirement for the undertaking and reviewing of SIAs being submitted as part of government approval in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. The SEAC plans to evaluate the SIA certification into the future. Key evaluation questions will focus on the impacts of the scheme on practitioners, the quality of SIAs undertaken, and the extent to which the scheme has assisted in addressing challenges experienced by SIA practitioners.

CONCLUSION

SIA practitioners should ‘be stronger advocates for the value of SIA’ (Vanclay, 2020, p. 129). For a field that has many challenges in delivering on its primary purpose, ‘to bring about a more sustainable and equitable biophysical and human environment’ (Vanclay, 2003, p. 6), certification is a concrete step towards greater acknowledgement and recognition of the domain and its practitioners. The CEnvP specialist certification in SIA is the first SIA certification of its kind globally. While its development will not solve all the challenges experienced by SIA practitioners, such a scheme will assist in raising the profile of SIA practice and will further acknowledge and substantiate the work undertaken by social practitioners across both public and private sectors. Such practitioners strive to: provide communities participating in an SIA with an effective voice in the decision-making processes that affect them; improve project design; and enhance community and project outcomes. While the road to certification has been long and winding, it is hoped that the learnings from the Australian and Aotearoa

New Zealand experience will provide a foundation for the development of further specialist certification schemes of this kind around the world.

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PART II

EXAMPLES FROM DIFFERENT SECTORS

4. The social impacts of dams and hydropower

Doug Smith

INTRODUCTION

The social impacts of hydropower and dams are frequently unavoidable and often poorly understood. Consequently, they are ineffectively addressed by project developers and operators. Over 20 years ago, the World Commission on Dams (WCD) concluded that the adverse social impacts of large dams had not been adequately assessed or accounted for. As a result, the construction and operation of large dams has had serious and lasting effects on the lives, livelihoods, and health of affected communities, with tens of millions of people displaced by dams or affected by downstream impacts, typically with inadequate compensation and ineffective restoration of their livelihoods (WCD, 2000).

Since the WCD report, assessment of the potential social impacts of proposed dam developments has improved, especially with the application of widely accepted standards and guidelines, including the International Finance Corporation (IFC) Performance Standards (IFC, 2012), the guidelines of various international financial institutions (e.g. EBRD, 2016; IFC, 2018), and the Hydropower Sustainability Tools and Standard and related guidance (Hydropower Sustainability Council, 2021). Despite these guidelines, it often remains the case that social impacts are inadequately assessed and poorly understood in the environmental and social assessments of proposed projects, and that some social impacts are not identified at all. Strategic decisions (for example, the selection of a project from a range of options) frequently do not take account of social impacts, and social impacts are rarely reassessed during subsequent construction and operations phases. For dams, there is no universally accepted framework or approach used to prompt the identification of social impacts, or to guide their assessment (Kirchherr & Charles, 2016).

This chapter explores the social impacts of dams, highlighting the impacts that are specific to dams, and it discusses why dams have profound social impacts. The chapter also discusses strategic planning to avoid and minimise social impacts, and the cumulative social impacts from dams and other infrastructure developments in a region. The chapter is unapologetically focused on the adverse social impacts of hydropower dams. This is not to underestimate the profound positive social impacts or benefits dams can bring – not least in providing low-cost renewable power to a region or nation, as well as local benefits such as employment, flood control, water supply, irrigation, and productive fisheries. The intention of the chapter is to increase understanding of adverse impacts so that they may be better identified and managed. Examples are provided of several large-scale hydropower dams, i.e. dams built to store and/or divert water for the generation of power. They are all larger than the International Commission on Large Dams (ICOLD) definition of a large dam, i.e. ‘dams with a height of 15 metres or greater from lowest foundation to crest or a dam between 5 metres and 15 metres impounding more than 3 million cubic metres’ (ICOLD, 2022a, online). Despite the chapter’s focus on hydropower dams, most environmental and social impacts also apply to dams built for water supply, irrigation, or flood protection that have no generation component, as well as to smaller

dams, weirs, and water diversion facilities. In this chapter, the term ‘dams’ will be used to refer collectively to all these facilities.

The author is a specialist in the social and environmental impacts of hydropower and dams. He has assessed and advised hydropower projects throughout the world, with over 25 years’ experience. He has played a leading role in developing and implementing hydropower sustainability tools, and has authored several publications on good international industry practice in relation to the social and environmental issues in hydropower (IHA, 2021a).

HYDROPOWER AND DAM PROJECTS

Dams have been used for thousands of years to store water, thereby ensuring adequate supplies during seasons of water scarcity, and to mitigate floods by capturing or diverting the highest flows. ICOLD (2022b) reports that the total storage volume of all dams was over 7,700 km³ among the 58,713 dams in its register (as of April 2020). WWF (2021, 2022) has concluded that only slightly over one third of the world’s longest rivers remain free-flowing, i.e. largely unaffected by human-made changes to flow and connectivity. Most of the remaining long, free-flowing rivers are in remote regions such as the Arctic, or in less-developed regions such as the Congo Basin.

For single-purpose dams registered by ICOLD, the primary purposes of dams are (in order of frequency): irrigation; hydropower; water supply; flood control; recreation; tailings; navigation; and fish farming. Dams are normally built across a watercourse, and store or divert water for these purposes. Some dams have large storage volumes that alter the timing of river flows, often shifting flows inter-seasonally or inter-annually. In hydropower, the dam enables water to be channelled from the storage reservoir to a power station, where the water turns one or more turbines. Even run-of-river hydropower projects, which are generally defined as projects with an active storage capacity of less than one day of average inflows, divert water to a powerhouse that may be some distance downstream or to another river.

Hydropower facilities vary considerably in type and design, and so do the social impacts they create. The most frequent arrangements are: storage hydropower, which creates a reservoir upstream of the dam, and channels water to a powerhouse at or a short distance downstream from the dam; ‘low head’ projects, which use a barrage to pass a large flow volume through turbines within its structure; and ‘high head’ projects, which use a dam and tunnelling to pass water to a power station at a lower altitude. Note that the word ‘head’ refers to the altitudinal difference between the surface of the upper reservoir or river and the tailrace waters leaving the power station. Box 4.1 presents a short description of some of the social impacts of specific examples of these three types of hydropower project.

BOX 4.1 SOCIAL IMPACTS OF DAMS USING EXAMPLES OF THE THREE TYPES OF HYDROPOWER PROJECT

Storage Hydropower

Project: Devoll
Location: Albania
Capacity: 256 MW
Generation: 703 GWh per year

This scheme comprised two storage projects, Banjë (72 MW) and Moglicë (184 MW), both located on the Devoll River, operating since 2016 and 2020 respectively. Banjë's dam is 80 m in height, creating a reservoir with a surface area of 14 km², and Moglicë's is 150 m, creating a 7.2 km² reservoir. The scheme physically displaced 50 households, presenting a risk that not all people would be able to re-establish their livelihoods and living standards. It also economically displaced a further 576 households from 30 villages, including about 50 absentee owners of residential property (the area was very rural with a high prevalence of out-migration). Further households were economically displaced by new roads built to replace roads that were submerged by the dam. As storage projects, both Banjë and Moglicë regulate flows downstream from the dams, increasing flow during seasons of low in-flows, but decreasing flows during high in-flow seasons. This has potential impacts on the downstream extraction of water for irrigation, fish farms, and water supply, as well as for sand and gravel extraction. A range of downstream impacts was felt during the initial filling of the Banjë reservoir. Over 30 sites of archaeological or historical interest required investigation and relocation, including burial sites, graves, and a war memorial.

Low Head, Run-of-River Hydropower

Project: Santo Antônio
Location: Brazil (State of Rondônia), on Madeira River, the largest tributary of the Amazon
Capacity: 3,568 MW
Generation: Over 21,200 GWh per year

Santo Antônio is one of two large run-of-river hydropower schemes located on the Madeira River, passing the Madeira's very large flows, which average 19,000 m³/s. While it has no storage capacity, Santo Antônio's barrage, 2.5 km in length, created a headpond of over 420 km², of which 142 km² was the pre-project river area. Commissioned in 2016, the project's social impacts derive from its large scale. It physically displaced 1,274 households, and economically displaced a further 1,878 households. Upstream and downstream fisheries were affected, with impacts on an estimated 700 fishers, and some sites used for traditional gold mining were lost. Almost 60 archaeological sites (43 were pre-colonial and 15 historical) were located in the project footprint, requiring rescue and relocation. Also, part of a railroad of heritage interest had to be recovered. There were potential risks and indirect impacts on two Indigenous territories located 50 km and 150 km from the project site.

High Head Hydropower

Project: Kabela A
 Location: Nepal, 800 km east of Kathmandu
 Capacity: 37.6 MW
 Generation: 206 GWh per year

Kabela A will divert waters using a relatively small dam (14 m in height) and a 4 km tunnel, returning waters to the river 118 m below. It will reduce river flows in a 15 km loop of the river. The affected communities are ethnically diverse, and over half are government-recognised Indigenous groups (*Adivasi Janajati*). Thirteen households, consisting of 112 people, will be economically displaced, but no physical displacement is anticipated. Social uses of the affected river include recreation (swimming, fishing), domestic uses (bathing, dish and clothes washing), and gravel and sand mining. Customary use of fish species of ritual and religious importance may also be affected. A key impact of reduced flows will be on religious sites and practices; therefore a minimum flow will be released partly to supply sufficient waters for cremation sites and a temple.

Source: Extracted from Hydropower Sustainability Council (2023).

WHY DO DAMS HAVE SIGNIFICANT SOCIAL IMPACTS?

All infrastructure projects have social impacts, but there are features intrinsic to dams that mean they can have more significant impacts and less easily avoided impacts than other infrastructure such as roads, wind farms, or solar farms. While guidance on the social and environmental impacts of dams has improved in recent years (e.g. IFC, 2018; IHA, 2021a), the reasons why dams have significant, intractable, and often unpredictable social impacts, and how these impacts differ from other infrastructure projects, have not been clearly articulated. The key reasons are: dams must be located on rivers; to meet their storage or generation objectives, their precise siting is not flexible; they are often in remote areas; they affect the river's provision of ecosystem services; they re-allocate access to water between competing water users; and they create safety risks. These are discussed below.

Dams must be located on rivers, and so they are relatively inflexible in their siting, unlike some alternative power generation or renewable options. For example, solar farms can usually be located anywhere with sufficient land with a suitable aspect. Furthermore, rivers are a source of water for drinking and domestic purposes, food (fish and other biota), nutrients, and water for agriculture and other services. Land in river valleys is normally the most fertile land, at all latitudes. For these reasons, communities cluster along rivers and in river valleys, generally placing dams in direct conflict with communities and resulting in dams normally displacing large numbers of people.

To create a sufficient storage volume of water or optimal head for power generation, dams must be sited at a specific location on the river. For example, the developers of the Bumbuna II Hydropower Scheme in Sierra Leone considered alternative levels of the upper reservoir, and concluded that, even though resettlement impacts would be considerably higher, a reservoir with full supply level of 320 masl was preferable to a 300 masl reservoir because the 300 masl option reduces the availability of power at certain times throughout the year and overall average power generation by approximately 30 per cent (Smith & Perkin, 2021). This inflex-

ibility means that it may be impossible to avoid or minimise the land requirements for a dam, and the associated displacement of communities and loss of infrastructure, such as roads that pass through the area that will become the reservoir.

Suitable sites for dams are often in remote areas and, to have access to high head, are usually in mountainous areas. This means that the communities affected are often poorer than the wider society, dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods, have a higher proportion of vulnerable households, and often have informal land tenure systems. The more remote the site, the more likely it is that the affected communities will be culturally distinct from the wider society. Sites of cultural value to these communities may be directly affected by dams because they are usually linked to the river, and the river itself may be of cultural value to them. In remote areas, the affected people may be entirely or partly Indigenous, presenting an additional dimension to social impacts, such as to their territorial lands, culture, and Indigenous rights. Remote sites for hydropower projects also require long transmission lines, over thousands of kilometres in some cases, which themselves can have significant land requirements and social impacts. The development of hydropower in the state of Sarawak in Malaysia provides a good example of how the remote location of dams created challenges arising from the loss of forest habitat used by Indigenous peoples, including the legal ineligibility for compensation of some land held under traditional land tenure (Colchester, 2000).

In storing or diverting water, dams alter community access to the ecosystem services provided by the river. This is more than simply reducing water availability in ‘dewatered’ reaches of the river, or dampening the seasonal amplitude in flows; the altered hydrological profile of the river affects how it provides ecosystem services. For example, it may affect the delivery of sediment that communities use in construction, or the annual delivery of nutrient-laden sediments to an agricultural floodplain. With the Nam Theun 2 project in Laos, by diverting waters from the Nam Theun basin to the Xe Bang Fai, a smaller river in a separate basin, declines in fish catch of 20 per cent and fishing income of 60–70 per cent on the Xe Bang Fai were created between 2009 and 2014, affecting a downstream population of about 115,000 people (ADB, 2019).

The concept of ‘ecosystem services’ has become widely understood and utilised, especially since its inclusion in the IFC Performance Standard 6 on ‘Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources’. The range of ecosystem services typically provided by rivers is outlined in Table 4.1. The provisioning function of water is a fundamental ecosystem service of rivers, such that the development and operation of dams has profound effects on the allocation of water between different water users; in some cases, competing water users. Diversion of waters for irrigation, which may benefit farmers, may result in lower water availability for industrial use farther downstream. This is a particular concern in transboundary rivers, giving rise to attempts to mediate and govern transboundary water use across river basins, for example the Nile Basin Initiative, an intergovernmental partnership of 10 Nile Basin countries (<https://www.nilebasin.org/>), and the Mekong River Commission (<https://www.mrcmekong.org/>).

Dams present safety risks because they divert and store large volumes of water. Rapidly increasing or decreasing flows downstream of a dam, public access to reservoirs, and the stability of dams and other infrastructure, during construction and operation, all present significant safety risks to the public. Dam failure has been a very significant issue both historically and recently. For example, in 2018, the failure of a saddle dam associated with the Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy hydroelectric dam in Laos resulted in flooding over 46 km², displacing more than 7,000 people and killing at least 71 people (Rujivanarom, 2019).

Table 4.1 *Ecosystem services provided by rivers*

Categories of ecosystem services	Ecosystem services provided by rivers
Provisioning services. The products people obtain from ecosystems.	Water for drinking and domestic purposes
	Water for irrigation for agriculture
	Water for industrial uses
	Food: fish and other vertebrates, invertebrates (e.g. crabs, shrimps, snails), and riparian plants
	Riparian plants used as materials or in construction, for example, reeds
	Gravel, sand, and silt
	Boat transport
Regulating services. The benefits people obtain from the regulation of ecosystem processes.	Power, from traditional water mills to hydroelectric power
	Drainage
	Domestic wastewater disposal, dilution, and transport
	Industrial wastewater disposal, dilution, and transport
	Temperature regulation – cooling
Cultural services. The non-material benefits people obtain from ecosystems.	Flood attenuation (e.g. wetlands)
	Recreation, including swimming, fishing, picnicking, beach sun-bathing, rafting, kayaking, and bird-watching
	Spiritual values and traditions associated with the river, including intangible heritage such as myths, legends, stories, and music
	Appreciation of the aesthetic beauty of the river by local people and domestic or international visitors
	Existence values: personal satisfaction from free-flowing rivers
Supporting services. Natural processes that maintain the other services.	Provision of water and nutrients to floodplains, supporting floodplain agriculture, and floodplain habitats that provide gathered natural resources
	Provision of water for animals that are hunted for meat, skins, and other animal products
	Support to wildlife and birds that provide cultural services, for example, the aesthetic value of kingfishers
	Wildlife, fisheries, and aesthetic beauty that attract tourism, providing a source of cash income

Source: The author.

A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIAL IMPACTS OF DAMS

Assessment of the social impacts of a dam would need to separately consider the following issues (discussed further below):

1. key features of the dam, construction, and operations;
2. causal factors that create impacts, including bio-physical factors (e.g. air quality, noise, water quality) and socio-economic factors (e.g. improved road access, and influx of employees);
3. affected persons and communities, and how they are affected;
4. locations where impacts will be felt, e.g. upstream and downstream; and
5. cumulative social impacts and legacy impacts.

This framework is not intended to be completely comprehensive, as the impacts of any particular facility will vary according to its specific location and features. Many impacts will

be due to the features that are specific to hydropower (as discussed above), while many will be similar to the impacts of any large-scale construction project. The impacts of the dam's associated facilities, including access roads and transmission lines, should also be identified and managed.

1. Key Features of the Dam, Construction, and Operations

Impacts of the key features of the dam should be considered separately from the impacts of construction activities and operations. Table 4.2 presents the social impacts that derive from each key feature of a dam. Dams create such profound permanent changes in land use and river flow that it is advisable to identify the impacts arising from these features separately. These key features include: the conversion (loss) of land due to the reservoir and infrastructure associated with the dam; the barrier created by the dam wall; the conversion of a flowing river to a slow-moving reservoir; the diversion or regulation of the river; and their location in remote areas. The key features of a dam are more likely to result in the dam-specific impacts discussed above. If these impacts are to be effectively avoided, minimised, and mitigated, strategic planning and decision-making about the siting and design of the project will be required.

Table 4.3 presents the social impacts arising from the construction activities undertaken to build a dam. Construction stage impacts, for example, noise disturbance to local residents, are likely to be similar to the construction stage impacts of other large infrastructure projects, and can generally be relatively easily mitigated. General guidance on the impacts of infrastructure will provide applicable standards and guidelines for the management and monitoring of these impacts, and most will be addressed through a construction stage environmental and social management plan.

Table 4.4 presents the social impacts arising from the operation of a dam. By separating the impacts of the project's key features from the impacts of ongoing operation, proper attention to impacts from operation can be given, and appropriate minimisation and mitigation measures found. A good example is the management of sediments that accumulate in the reservoir: the social impacts of alternative management options, for example flushing sediments downstream or dredging sediments, and their subsequent disposal, should be assessed.

2. Causal Factors

Tables 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 present social impacts using the structure of the key features and activities of the dam, together with the factors or determinants that cause impacts. Such factors are also referred to as 'impact factors'. Within the categories of key features, construction activities, and operations, these factors are used to group and prompt the identification of social impacts, and to propose some consistency in the impact assessment process. These factors have been listed in the tables using an ordering (physical, biological, social) common in EIA practice:

- *physical*: air quality; noise and vibration; water availability; water quality and sediments; groundwater; seismicity;
- *biological, including ecosystem services*: disruption of ecosystem services; biotic effects; and

- *social*: physical displacement; economic displacement; temporary land conversion; loss of economic output; disruption of access; heritage, visual amenity, and recreation; traffic and site security; failure of infrastructure; safety on water; increased access and influx; and employees.

The advantage of considering such factors during an impact assessment process, and preferably at an early stage of the project concept, is that it will prompt the identification of the technical and specialist studies and expertise necessary to assess the social impacts. For example, if there are potentially significant impacts arising from the altered sediment regime of the river, technical analysis such as sediment modelling will be necessary to assess this impact.

3. Affected Persons and Communities and How They Are Affected

In understanding the social impacts of dams, it is important to characterise who are affected and how they are affected. In practice, this is often done by identifying which social groups are affected by each of the impacts arising from the above causal factors, but this is rarely approached systematically. For example, the framework in Tables 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 could be extended to present the social groups affected and location for each impact. For each impact, the analysis should consider its distribution among social groups within communities, its distribution between communities, and the consequences for their health, livelihood assets, culture, and rights. EIA reports frequently include analyses of gender and vulnerable groups, but these are rarely a satisfactory analysis of the position of women or vulnerable groups in the local context, or of the differential impacts they will experience as a result of the project. The identification of stakeholder groups and their interests will inform the identification of impacts and who will be affected, at least when done with sufficient precision and when based on thorough stakeholder engagement (IHA, 2020, 2021a).

Dams are likely to have different or greater adverse impacts on women and girls due to the effects of dams on ecosystem services, as well as construction and influx impacts that any large infrastructure project creates. In developing countries, women often have traditional roles and tasks, for example farming vegetables on small riverside or floodplain plots, which are most likely to be lost (upstream) or negatively affected by altered flows (downstream). Women are often engaged in and most dependent on the gathering of communal natural resources – through fishing, gathering of small aquatic animals for food (e.g. snails), aquatic herbs, reeds, lianas, and other non-timber forest products – that are lost due to the development of dams. These are often overlooked in compensation packages (IHA, 2021a).

The impacts of physical and economic displacement – with the loss of social networks, altered economic status, family upheaval, and changes in access to health and education – may be experienced differently by women and men. Compensation for displacement is typically given to the male ‘head of household’ on the assumption that he will continue to provide for the household, which can create risks of misuse of the compensation and the break-up and impoverishment of families. Land-for-land compensation may also suffer from gender bias. For example in Niger, the developers of the Kandadji Dam inventoried areas cultivated by women and by men, but the women’s areas were added to a total replacement plot allocated solely to the male of the household, and consisted of rice-growing plots, which were unsuitable for the cash crops previously favoured by women (Skinner, 2018).

Gender-based issues arising from the construction workforce and the social changes wrought by development are increasingly recognised (Social Development Direct, 2020).

Table 4.2 Social impacts deriving from the key features of a hydropower project

Feature	Factor	Social impacts
Conversion (loss) of land	Disruption of ecosystem services	Loss of or displacement from provisioning ecosystem services
	Physical displacement	Decline in living standards Loss of access to social infrastructure and services Alienation of Indigenous peoples from lands and resources to which they have collective attachment, where they practise traditional resource use, and derive cultural or historical meaning
	Economic displacement	Loss of livelihood assets (farms, plantations), decline in livelihoods and incomes
	Loss of economic output	Economic impact of reduced agricultural and forest production and other natural resource production
	Disruption of access	Disruption of access routes, including roads, tracks, and pathways Severance of links between communities on opposite river banks
	Heritage, visual amenity, and recreation	Inundation or destruction of cultural heritage, including historic buildings, graves, and cemeteries Loss of recreational areas Visual impact of built infrastructure
	Dam wall	Disruption of ecosystem services
Loss of economic output		Economic impact of a reduction in fisheries production due to barriers to fish migration
Disruption of access		Restricted navigation up and downstream of the dam location
Failure of infrastructure		Dam break: widespread injury and loss of life
Heritage, visual amenity, and recreation		Loss of visual amenity of the free-flowing river and the visual impact of built infrastructure
Conversion of the river to a reservoir	Water quality and sediments	Reduction in water quality used for domestic purposes and recreation, in the reservoir and in waters passed downstream Deposition of sediment at the reservoir tail and tributaries causing localised flooding
	Groundwater	Raised groundwater levels around the reservoir, affecting drainage and wastewater infrastructure
	Seismicity	Induced increased frequency or seismicity of seismic events
	Disruption of ecosystem services	Reduction or loss in fisheries production due to the conversion of the river to a reservoir
	Biotic effects	Increased abundance of vectors of disease due to the formation of the reservoir, resulting in increased incidence of vector-borne diseases Bioaccumulation of methyl mercury in reservoir biota, and in people consuming these biota
	Heritage, visual amenity, and recreation	Loss of the spiritual or intangible cultural values of the affected river Loss of recreational uses of the river, for fishing, rafting, canoeing etc.

The presence of a construction workforce (and other project employees) potentially exposes women and girls in the community to sexual harassment and the risk of sexual exploitation. Some male employees and men who in-migrate to the area stimulate the emergence of a sex industry and use alcohol and drugs, resulting in greater risks of gender-based violence and harassment, and sexual exploitation and abuse of women and girls. Men, young men especially, may have their social position challenged by the influx of employees, are at greater risk of verbal and physical harassment and violence in interactions with employees, and may be drawn into substance misuse.

Feature	Factor	Social impacts
Diversion or regulation of the river	Water availability	Reduction or complete loss of water availability for domestic and industrial purposes in dewatered reaches Reduction in availability of surface water and groundwater for extraction for domestic and industrial purposes, at times of lower flows Reduction in water available to downstream schemes including hydropower and irrigation, and transboundary impacts
	Disruption of ecosystem services	Reduction or loss in fisheries production due to altered flows and impeded access Reduction in beneficial flooding and deposition of sediment for downstream floodplain agriculture Reduction in beneficial delivery of sediment for riverine fisheries and coastal fisheries
	Economic displacement	Loss of riverbank agriculture or other areas of productive land (e.g. reedbanks) due to increased dry season flows Downstream riverbank and riverbed erosion, resulting in loss of land and lowering of groundwater levels
	Disruption of access	Impeded access across the river during higher flows
	Heritage, visual amenity, and recreation	Reduced visual amenity, and incomes from tourism from loss or disruption in waterfalls Loss of incomes in recreational industries that depend on flowing water, for example rafting and recreational fishing
Location, often in remote areas	Increased access and influx	Increased access results in encroachment on informally owned land Increased access results in loss of habitat providing ecosystem services, due to improved access on roads and on the reservoir Some social groups who are not able to benefit from social and economic change may suffer from it, for example higher prices

Source: The author.

Women and men are also likely to experience the health impacts of dams differently. Dams result in health impacts on local communities, in addition to the safety risks mentioned above. Separate consideration of health will prompt identification of potential public health risks and impacts. Those that are specific to dams include: increased incidence of diseases, water-borne or otherwise, that are linked to the river due to construction activities in and discharges to the river; increased incidence of vector-borne diseases due to the creation of vector habitat in the reservoir; contact with or consumption of water of unhealthy quality; bioaccumulation of methyl-mercury in some latitudes; and loss of the provisioning ecosystem service of traditional medicinal plants. The precise impacts will be context specific. For example, the development of dams in Sarawak, Malaysia, has presented an impact of increased incidence of melioidosis (a bacterial disease found in contaminated water and soil, transmitted by direct contact or inhalation of water droplets) and leptospirosis (a bacterial disease spread through the urine of infected domestic and wild animals).

Health impacts also arise from the influx of employees and camp followers. This may result in communicable diseases, non-communicable diseases including from substance abuse, and additional pressure on health services and infrastructure. Physical displacement may result in disrupted access to health services and infrastructure, and nutritional impacts (e.g. loss of access to protein). The impact of infrastructure as large and transforming as hydropower can also result in increased anxiety and mental health impacts among local communities.

Vulnerable groups include those who may be distinct in some way from mainstream society (see Chapter 17). For these groups, the project should find tailored means of engagement and assess impacts differentially. Depending on the context of the project, they may include: women-headed households (for example, widows and single mothers) that may be most

Table 4.3 Social impacts from construction of a hydropower project

Factor	Impact
Air quality	Health and nuisance impacts of dust, vehicle emissions, and emissions of construction machinery
Noise and vibration	Disturbance to local residents, businesses, schools, etc.
Water availability	Temporary diversion of river waters from river sections to allow construction Extraction of surface waters for construction, reducing water availability for local domestic use
Water quality and sediments	Pollution of domestic sources of water due to run-off of sediment-laden water from project sites Pollution of domestic sources of water due to wastewater discharges from sites and camps, and from spills of hazardous substances
Temporary land conversion	Temporary physical and economic displacement
Heritage, visual amenity, and recreation	Visual impact of the construction site
Traffic and site security	Safety risks for community members passing through or around the construction site Safety risks for community members from project traffic
Failure of infrastructure	Coffer dam failure: risk of injury and fatalities Spoil failure: risk of injury and fatalities; loss of land
Safety on water	During filling: drowning, downstream loss of water Bites or injury from wildlife moving out of the reservoir area during filling
Increased access and influx	Impacts of influx on ecosystem services (e.g. increased pressure on fishing resources and fuel wood resources from workers or camp management) Influx of camp followers with anti-social behaviour and environmental impacts
Employees	Occupational safety risks for workers, especially when working on water, at height, during tunnelling, and in vehicles Gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and harassment of local community members, especially women and girls Conflict between workers and local community members

Source: The author.

Table 4.4 Social impacts of the operations of a hydropower project

Factor	Impact
Noise and vibration	Disturbance to local residents, businesses, schools, etc.
Water quality and sediments	Surface water pollution from oil leakage from the power station or other sites Surface water pollution from the flushing and sluicing of accumulated sediment H ₂ S odour in initial years of impoundment (common in tropical zones, due to decomposition of vegetation) Erosion and landslips around the downstream river due to abrupt changes in flow Wind erosion of exposed drawdown area
Traffic and site security	Safety risks for community members entering the power station or switchyard etc. Safety risks for community members on project access roads
Safety on water	Safety risks for community members on the downstream river Safety risks for community members on the reservoir
Employees	Occupational safety risks for workers

Source: The author.

dependent on ecosystem services or not able to take up employment; ethnic minorities; caste or religious minorities; landless people, or those without formal land titles; people who practise a distinct livelihood, such as pastoralism; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people; internally displaced persons or refugees; and those with limited education or who are illiterate.

More vulnerable social groups may depend more on communal natural resources for their livelihoods – fisheries, reeds, or pastoral resources, for example – but impacts of hydropower on these are often overlooked or difficult to compensate for effectively.

In some contexts, Indigenous peoples may be a vulnerable minority, while in other cases the entire local community may be Indigenous. The International Hydropower Association has published a guide on the impacts of hydropower on Indigenous peoples and their management (IHA, 2021b). Dams with impacts on Indigenous peoples will generate an additional dimension to social impacts, specifically on the rights, culture, territories, and ecosystem-based livelihoods of Indigenous peoples. For example, a dam built in the ancestral territories to which the Indigenous peoples hold collective attachment is akin to an imposition by a foreign power. A number of standards and instruments have been developed to recognise and safeguard the unique rights of Indigenous peoples, the most prominent of which is the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Hanna & Vanclay, 2013).

A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims, and access) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when ‘it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation’ (Chambers & Conway, 1992, p. 6). In predicting the impacts of a dam, applying an understanding of livelihoods – and the physical, social, human, natural, and financial assets they depend on – will provide a deeper understanding of the dam’s implications for rural communities. For example, livelihoods based on livestock are often overlooked in the assessment of the social impacts of dams. In Sierra Leone, land conversion for the reservoir for the planned Bumbuna II scheme will likely affect some households of the Fula ethnicity who practise livestock transhumance, prompting the developer to target them as vulnerable livestock-owning households and to include entitlements to replacement grazing land and livestock health in the reservoir resettlement action plan (Smith, 2020).

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled. They are enshrined in international declarations, such as the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights. Frameworks of rights, such as the United Nations (2011) *Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights*, provide a further means of understanding the social impacts of dams. A human rights-based approach is now widely advocated in commentary on the social impacts of dams, with the WCD (2000) advocating such an approach over 20 years ago. The WCD identified human rights in the context of large dams as both *legal rights* (e.g. constitutional rights, customary rights, rights codified through legislation, property rights) and *rights to resources and goods* (e.g. rights to material resources such as land and water, rights to spiritual, moral, or cultural goods such as religion and dignity). The WCD also highlighted the importance of the spatial and temporal distribution of rights (rights of local, basin, regional, and national entities, the rights of riparian countries, or the rights of present and future generations). Some civil society partners have provided a practical synopsis of rights, listing various categories of rights, from self-determination to the rights of the child (International Rivers, 2014). However, there are few examples of a human rights-based approach being applied systematically in dam development or in the analysis of dam impacts. A rare example is the analysis of the Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project, located on the border between India and Nepal, which was based on a legal mapping of rights, stakeholder analysis (identification of duty-bearers and rights-holders), assessment of national implementation of applicable rights, and evaluation of how the rights and duties were applied in this case (Grönwall, 2020).

4. Locations Where Impacts Will Be Felt

In EIA, it is common practice to define the area (or areas) of influence of a proposed project. These define the geographical scope within which the impacts of the project are assessed. Often, direct and indirect areas of influence are identified, with the latter being a wider zone of influence in which indirect impacts may be experienced. The geographical area across which social impacts of dams will be felt will vary considerably depending on each impact, and it is not always clear whether an impact is direct or indirect.

It is important to locate social impacts by a clear linkage to the settlements affected. Systematically zoning areas, using areas where a similar range of impacts will be felt, or where a common management response is applicable, will also prompt identification and better definition of impacts. The social impacts of dams can be zoned into: the infrastructure zone of impact (around the dam and construction sites); an upstream/reservoir zone of impact, possibly extended to include the catchment; downstream zones of impact, which may be separated by the degree of influence on flows or morphological features such as a delta; a transmission line corridor; and an access route corridor. Transboundary impacts are a particular concern, as their management will require cross-border cooperation. The social impacts experienced will be different in each of these zones of impact, and all must be considered.

5. Cumulative Social Impacts and Legacy Impacts

Due to their combined effects with other existing and planned developments and global trends, such as the changing climate, dams often have cumulative impacts. This is especially because of the effects of dams on river systems. Therefore, Cumulative Impact Assessment is one approach to the strategic planning of dams (see below). Cumulative impacts typically arise from a range of developments and trends, including climate change. The development of new hydropower projects is a response to rising demand for power as the wider economy grows, and there may be an existing trend of increasing land conversion for residential and industrial construction in the project area that is also experiencing economic growth, so the project's provision of additional power further strengthens that trend. This means that cumulative adverse social impacts are highly likely, even if this wider economic development is welcome. An example is the cumulative impact on the prevalence of sexual harassment of women in the local community due to the hydropower construction workforce, as well as the workforce of a neighbouring mine, for example. Sometimes different impacts of one dam may have a cumulative impact, for example, the destruction of forest from which people gather non-timber forest products, combined with the destruction of the remainder of the forest due to influx enabled by the project's access roads.

There may be cumulative impacts with the impacts of previous projects that were left unmitigated or not compensated, i.e. 'legacy issues'. Legacy issues are common in dam development, due to limited knowledge of the social impacts of dams in previous decades and a failure to address them. Legacy issues are typically social impacts of: historical disempowerment and relocation of communities including Indigenous peoples; physical or economic displacement by previous developments or abandoned projects that was not compensated; ineffective livelihood restoration programmes of previous developments; and poorly managed social change in the local area due to influx of in-migrants, sexual exploitation, and abuse. These impacts result in a legacy of mistrust in the local community for developers of dams, due to limited

implementation of commitments (especially employment opportunities and the provision of electricity supplies), a limited response to unexpected impacts, or mismanaged or abusive communications between previous developers and communities.

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR THE AVOIDANCE AND MINIMISATION OF SOCIAL IMPACTS

Strategic planning of dams at national, river basin, and catchment levels has wide support in the hydropower sector globally, including from partners such as the IFC and civil society. There is a spectrum of approaches to strategic planning, including Strategic Environmental Assessment, system-scale planning, basin-level planning, and Cumulative Impact Assessment. Other terminology for strategic approaches includes: integrated catchment management; integrated water resource management; hydropower-by-design; power sector planning; and landscape approaches. They all tend to be based on the premise that while some level of social impact is inevitable, the careful selection of an optimal combination of dams can minimise these social impacts while maximising power generation or other purposes of the dams. The effective assessment and management of impacts, including social impacts, requires initial assessment of potential impacts at an early stage so that the most damaging impacts (especially those that cannot be effectively mitigated) can be avoided and minimised.

Strategic planning is especially important for dams because of the reasons outlined above. Basin-level planning may be as simple as planning to position any new hydropower developments on a tributary in the basin that has existing hydropower developments, while leaving other tributaries without any developments to remain unmodified and free-flowing. More advanced approaches, such as the Hydropower-by-Design approach applied by The Nature Conservancy (Opperman et al., 2015), identify alternative combinations of proposed hydropower developments, compare them using a range of parameters, and consider alternative scenarios. This can also be extended to compare combinations of complementary hydropower and other renewable projects. The key social impacts applicable through this approach would be the number of people or households physically displaced, the numbers dependent on the most affected downstream river reaches, the number and significance of physical cultural heritage sites affected, and whether Indigenous peoples' rights are affected.

CONCLUSION

Understanding of the social impacts of dams has deepened since the World Commission on Dams report (WCD, 2000), with a considerable body of research now available (e.g. Tilt et al., 2009; Hay et al., 2019). Dams have intractable and significant social impacts because they must be located on rivers, bringing them in direct conflict with communities, usually in specific locations and often in remote areas. Dams affect the provision of ecosystem services, re-allocate access to water between competing water users, and create safety risks. The identification and prediction of social impacts in practice, for example in the environmental and social impact assessments of dams, has also improved since the WCD. However, there remains no universally accepted framework for the scholarly analysis of the social impacts of dams (Kirchherr & Charles, 2016). To translate improved understanding into action at the project

level and at strategic levels, more effective frameworks are required to avoid, minimise, mitigate, and adequately compensate the social impacts of dams.

This chapter has presented a framework for the identification of social impacts that distinguishes the impacts of dams' key features (the conversion of land due to the reservoir and infrastructure associated with the dam; the barrier created by the dam wall; the conversion of a flowing river to a slow-moving reservoir; the diversion or regulation of the river; and their location in remote areas) from the impacts of construction activities and operations. It advocated for the identification of impacts according to the underlying causal factors, the affected persons and communities, location, and whether there are cumulative effects. Improved social impact assessment and planning, taking account of the social impacts presented here, can enable dams to be developed more sustainably and improve outcomes for local communities.

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5. The use of social impact assessment in transport projects

Lara Katharine Mottee

INTRODUCTION

Projects in the transport sector incorporate a wide and varied range of infrastructure. While this transport infrastructure may have a standalone purpose, it is often integrated with mixed-use development and industry operations in other sectors. It forms part of the social fabric of daily life, providing connectivity between different sites and activities such as households, industry, employment, and commercial centres. The design of a whole-of-country, region, or city transportation system is heavily influenced by, and influences, patterns of land use in the built environment and the physical form of the natural environment. Transport infrastructure may be linear in shape, typified by its straight form in the landscape, or it may be non-linear, situated at a single location, forming nodes in a network that is connected to the wider transportation system by linear infrastructure. Typical modes of transport include rail, road, inland waterways (linear infrastructure), airports and maritime ports (non-linear infrastructure), and with services provided for freight and passenger purposes, using different means of transport, for example, buses, cars, bicycles, trains or ships (OECD, 2022). Different types of transport infrastructure in a transportation system are conceptualised as lines connected via nodes in a network (Rodrigue, 2020). This conceptualisation is typically what is entered into a transport model and used as the basis for many forms of analysis as part of the transport planning process.

The outcomes of transport planning are focused on the goals of accessibility and mobility. As such, these goals are typically the parameters for analysis in the transport models used for designing transportation systems. The optimal overall performance of a transportation system is linked to improvements in both accessibility and mobility (Levine et al., 2019). Accessibility considers the desirability of destinations and the availability of transportation between those locations, as well as the delivery of services and goods to a location. Mobility is directly related to the demand to reach a certain destination, and the capacity of the system or the individual's physical capability (aka personal mobility) in that system to meet this demand in a given timeframe (Levine et al., 2019). Accessibility and mobility directly influence each other, but not always positively, as improved mobility may not always increase accessibility. Both accessibility and mobility may be impacted by changes over time in connectivity and in the proximity of desirable destinations created by land-use development. Typical metrics applied in models to measure the performance of a transportation system against accessibility and mobility are faster vehicle-operating speed, distance travelled, travel time, person/vehicle movements, level of service (for roads), and costs, because of their measurable benefits to users (Litman, 2003).

The potential impact transport has on society is linked to the physical form of the infrastructure, the geographical characteristics of its location, and the relationships transport has with

other locations across time and space, as measured by accessibility and mobility (Levine et al., 2019; Rodrigue, 2020). The physical footprints of transport infrastructure can range from the narrowest width of a local cycleway to the railway corridors of the high-speed trains traversing hundreds of kilometres across the countryside. Some forms of transport infrastructure projects, such as an underground metro or road tunnel, may not have a significant above-ground footprint at all once constructed. Other transport projects may not require linear physical infrastructure, and instead infrastructure is only required at the origin and receiving destination, such as an international shipping route. Other transport initiatives, such as the implementation of a vehicle-sharing programme, may also require very little additional infrastructure, relying on the existing infrastructure of the dominant modes of transport although facilitating behavioural changes.

The varied footprints of transport infrastructure present different methodological challenges for Social Impact Assessment (SIA) practitioners and transport planners interested in assessing the social impacts of transport projects. Defining the social area of influence, particularly when the ‘transport corridor’ for the physical infrastructure proposed does not fit within a single geographically bounded area, can be a difficult task. SIAs prepared based on transport initiatives generally focus on intangible effects and the potential benefits these initiatives can bring to society. Often these initiatives rely on minimal new infrastructure and instead engender behavioural change and avoid many of the social impacts created by large infrastructure construction. For SIAs of physical transport infrastructure, minimising the negative physical impacts of the transport corridor on the social area of influence is an essential first step in avoiding social impacts. Project land acquisition and associated displacement and resettlement, and consequent impacts on human health and wellbeing, are among the most significant negative impacts of transport projects and should be avoided or minimised (Vanclay, 2017). With technological innovations, construction methodologies have been adapted over time to minimise impacts (for example, using tunnelling techniques instead of cut-and-cover trenching); however, long-term social impacts may still arise during operation if impacts are not considered during route selection and managed appropriately over time.

In this chapter, I discuss how social issues are conceptualised and assessed during the planning and development of transport infrastructure and initiatives. Firstly, I briefly introduce the established connections in research and practice involving society and assessments in transport planning. I then introduce two broad phases in the lifecycle of transport projects to highlight the variability of SIA’s influence on social outcomes. Finally, I discuss key social issues for assessment and management at each phase, and conclude with a reflection on the systemic changes needed to enhance the influence of SIA in the transport sector.

SOCIETY AND ASSESSMENTS IN TRANSPORT PLANNING

Transport infrastructure has the potential to generate significant social benefits and to contribute to sustainability aims for a locality, as it is almost always built for the specific purpose of aiding society. For example, its purpose might be to transport goods in a logistics freight line or provide a rail passenger service for individuals wanting to travel from home to work. The aims of large-scale transport infrastructure projects are often centred on positive socio-economic contributions, such as employment opportunities. Public transport initiatives are often politically motivated to appease the interests of broader society, seeking to improve

the lives of citizens (Searle & Legacy, 2021). The potential benefits of transport are considerable, providing that the opportunity for creating social benefits is explored from the earliest stages of planning (Mottee & Howitt, 2018; Mottee et al., 2020a). Transport interventions have the potential to be life-changing and city-shaping, but when they are poorly planned, they can also exacerbate social problems.

When aligned with good practice guidelines (e.g. Vanclay, 2003; Esteves et al., 2012; Vanclay et al., 2015), SIA methods and processes have an essential role to play in managing the social impact of transport projects and enhancing potential opportunities. However, SIAs for transport projects are faced with similar constraints and limitations as SIA practice more widely (Parsons, 2020; Vanclay, 2020; Mottee, 2022). Dominant practices in transport planning see early phase project assessments focus only on technical issues, such as engineering design and economic analyses, with major investment decisions often relying on cost–benefit analyses (Lucas et al., 2022; Mottee et al., 2020a; Shortall & Mouter, 2021; Stanley et al., 2021). Although issues relevant to society may be considered when transport planners do their assessments (for example, equity of pricing and demand for services, and sustainability), these are predominantly those issues that can be quantified and modelled (Bertolini, 2012; Lucas et al., 2022). This narrow conceptualisation of social impacts limits the opportunity for public engagement in the assessment process and ignores the potential value that qualitative data can offer. When undertaken in accordance with good practice, SIA helps to identify, assess and manage the potential positive benefits and opportunities that transport can bring for society.

Despite the prevalence of a highly technical focus in the assessments of transport projects, there has been a shift to incorporating social issues in research in the transport planning and geography disciplines, and in practice. Discussions of social and distributional equity and social justice, which highlight the limitations of traditional transport appraisal for assessing social issues, are becoming more common (see for example Geurs et al., 2009; Bertolini, 2012; Martens, 2017; Sheller, 2018; Lucas et al., 2022). Markovich and Lucas (2011, p. 9) described the distributional impacts of transport as ‘the different ways in which the social impacts of transport affect various groups in society.’ Inequities and inequalities can arise through the uneven distribution of social benefits and costs for services, and from indirect social impacts arising from changes in the biophysical environment, such as noise, air pollution, land acquisition and severance (Infrastructure and Transport Ministers, 2020). Inequality and inequity can be especially exacerbated by linear transport infrastructure projects, as one group that may benefit from a development (e.g. members of the population travelling from A to B) may not be the group who experiences the negative impacts (the directly impacted local community). SIA processes are designed to understand and manage these distributional impacts, as SIA is tasked ‘to bring about a more sustainable and equitable biophysical and human environment’ (Vanclay, 2003, p. 5). SIAs for transport projects draw from a range of other technical studies (transport, safety, environment and economic analyses, for example) to provide a holistic perspective that considers the distribution of effects on society.

Decision-makers, sponsors and financiers have also become interested in minimising the negative consequences of the transport sector on the key social sustainability challenges facing society (e.g. climate change and greenhouse gas contributions) and in addressing socio-economic disadvantage through transport development. Common discourses in practice and literature discuss the influence of transport projects on social exclusion, severance, inclusion and disadvantage, human health (physical and psychological, such as effects resulting from pollution or noise), environmental health (air quality, soil, water, noise and land use)

and sustainability (climate change and disaster resilience) (Lucas, 2012; Cohen et al., 2014; Stanley et al., 2021). These discussions are all linked to the key social indicators of wellbeing and quality of life. The solutions to many of these complex social challenges are not unique to the transport sector and are a priority for many sectors as they require cross-sectoral efforts to address. Consequently, SIA has an important contribution to make in facilitating these assessments as discussed in this chapter and other chapters in this *Handbook*.

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT IN TRANSPORT PLANNING

To understand how SIA is applied to planning transport projects, and where it offers the most value, it is useful to divide the transport planning process into two very broad phases: Phase 1, the strategic and conceptual phase; and Phase 2, the detailed design, construction and operation phase. During early strategic and conceptual planning, a project might be developed as a commercial-in-confidence or cabinet-in-confidence business case, usually without public engagement. It may also be included in a strategic metropolitan, regional plan or policy document, framed around the public benefits and positive impacts of the proposed project and exhibited for public comment. In this first phase, there is usually limited engineering design and there may still be more than one concept option under consideration. As such, there is still scope to change the major characteristics of a project and receive feedback to enhance the social sustainability of a project and identify and manage any negative impacts. The second phase refers to the planning that occurs once a project's business case has been approved and the concept design is agreed. This is when assessments are focused on the infrastructure footprint and its interface with the local environment and the benefits the project is purported to bring during operation. These assessments are usually undertaken as part of regulatory planning approval processes. Social impacts identified during this phase might be direct or indirect, tangible or intangible effects associated with the changes in the local environment due to planning, construction and operation of the transport project.

The phases applied in this chapter are intended to help distinguish the two important roles SIA can play in assessing and managing the social impacts of transport projects: the problem solver (Phase 1) and the impact manager (Phase 2). As the problem solver, the SIA process can be applied with its greatest potential to avoid harm and create opportunities to benefit society and improve wellbeing, and to align with public policy objectives. It is in the earliest stages of a project (that is, during Phase 1) where there is greatest potential for beneficial opportunities to be identified and planned for. During Phase 1, SIA also has the most potential to influence the longer-term social outcomes of a project. Once the concept is agreed, the potential influence of SIA to enhance the wider societal benefits and align the project with public policy objectives decreases. In Phase 2, SIA's role shifts primarily to managing a project's localised social impacts. This second role, as impact manager, often sees SIA undertaken as part of planning approval and the regulatory process, and involves managing the negative impacts as well as the positive benefits to ensure they are maximised to protect the most vulnerable people in the project footprint. There is also the opportunity in Phase 2 to develop more specific management strategies as the detailed design and construction methodologies are underdeveloped in Phase 1.

Ideally, the roles proposed for SIA (Phase 1: problem solver, and Phase 2: impact manager) are aligned with good practice and transparent government regulatory processes to facilitate their successful implementation (Figure 5.1). However, it is important to recognise that SIAs are often undertaken by practitioners operating within a wider project planning and governance context that may constrain the effectiveness of practice and limit their success (Mottee, 2022). Transport projects can be highly contentious and create conflict, similar to other forms of large public infrastructure, and planning processes can be corrupted for personal gain, especially in the engagement of consulting and construction firms that might be involved in the different phases of the project lifecycle (Hanna et al., 2016; Hossain & Fuller, 2021; Ogwang & Vanclay, 2021). There are many instances in both developing and developed political contexts where there has been a misuse of governmental powers for financial or political benefit in planning transport projects with little or no social benefit (see for example, Kahangirwe & Vanclay, 2022; Ogwang & Vanclay, 2021; Searle & Legacy, 2021). All those involved in planning transport projects must be cognisant of these political contexts and the potential constraints in undertaking effective SIAs throughout all phases of the project lifecycle.

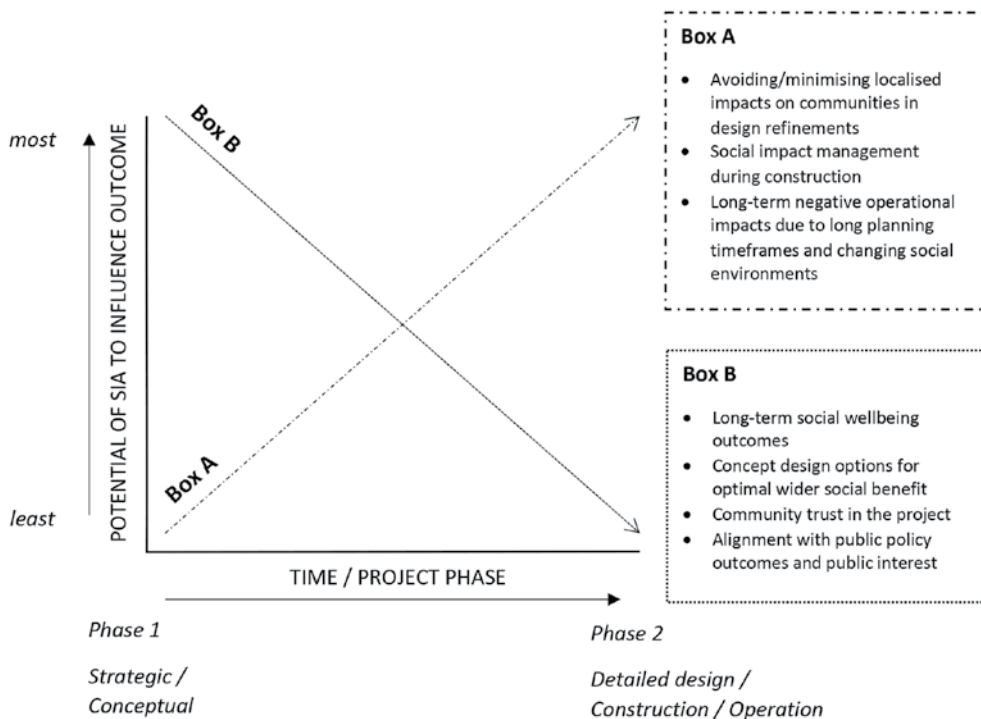


Figure 5.1 Potential opportunities for SIA to influence outcomes of transport projects

PHASE 1: STRATEGIC AND CONCEPTUAL PHASE (SIA AS THE PROBLEM SOLVER)

Before a project becomes a project, it is a concept of the desired outcome of policy or plan. The project is often considered in a strategic way – as a solution to a transport problem for a geographic area. This first phase is the point in the project’s development where SIA has the greatest potential to influence the project to enhance positive social benefit. It is when the concept design is developed, and options are being considered, with a distinct set of aims and goals for the transport project. These aims and goals are likely to be aligned with either public policies or corporate objectives (depending on the sponsors’ goals), which inform the purpose of the project. Public transport, with its specific purpose to provide a service to the public, will normally have goals focused on people and meeting the needs of present and future populations.

Current best practices in transport planning seek to align and even integrate strategic urban/town planning and transport planning objectives to achieve sustainable and desirable goals for towns and cities. For example, in Europe, there are the Sustainability Urban Mobility Plans that seek to integrate sustainability mobility goals for cities with transport planning and management (Rupprecht Consult, 2019). These and other strategic plans are set with long timeframes (up to 30 years in some cases) to achieve their goals. If projects are engineered and designed with a goal of social benefits clearly in mind, they present a significant opportunity to bring something positive for society. However, undesirable social impacts often arise because of inadequate ex-ante assessments (unanticipated impacts), or anticipated impacts that were poorly managed. Exploring the opportunities to minimise social impacts and maximise social benefits can be difficult to do during the early stages of transport planning, as assessments are typically led by engineers using ‘predict and provide’ modelled assessment methods. These modelled transport planning assessment methods rely on engineering data to predict transport need and provide transport infrastructure based on patronage numbers, and are commonly paired with a cost–benefit analysis to advocate for projects in their business cases (Lucas et al., 2022; Mottee et al., 2020a; Shortall & Mouter, 2021). These assessment methods are also criticised for their inadequate consideration of distributional effects (Bertolini, 2012) and wellbeing impacts (Stanley et al., 2021), and because of their limited inclusion of qualitative data derived from key stakeholders – namely the affected public or users (Lucas et al., 2022). This is where SIA’s role as the problem solver becomes pertinent; when undertaken alongside modelling or to inform modelling at the early stages of planning, SIA can identify opportunities to maximise community benefits.

Maximising Community Benefits

As highlighted earlier in this chapter, in transport planning there are two key goals, accessibility and mobility. In developing a business case and in optimising design options, these are the most important objectives. However, they can also exacerbate social problems: for example, there is a link between poverty and social exclusion due to the poor accessibility of transport services (Stanley et al., 2021). SIA, conducted at the early stages of planning, can help to identify the potential vulnerable stakeholders that could become disadvantaged or be further marginalised by an activity, and identify those that may benefit from a project. SIA can then be applied to assess and manage the extent of this impact.

While there is a tendency in project-based impact assessments to focus on mitigating negative impacts, undertaking SIA in the early stages of project planning provides a powerful opportunity to identify and enhance positive impacts. SIA can also help decision-makers choose between several concept options about which they may be weighing up the likely benefits and harms. Identifying where and how individuals, communities and populations may be further excluded by a transport intervention provides an opportunity for transport to be more inclusive. The benefits of more inclusive transport are well known: by improving accessibility and connectivity, there is not only an increased potential for participation in a greater variety of employment types, but also for participation in societal activities, such as recreation, that lead to an overall improvement in quality of life and wellbeing. There is no doubt that transport planners will assess accessibility and mobility during strategic phases, being the key goals of transport, but they may not consider these issues from the differing perspectives of the varying groups in society and improving their quality of life. However, it is also common that, at this early stage, assessments are focused solely on model outputs. This is where SIA can be a ‘problem solver’, focusing on issues of socio-economic disadvantage in a local environment and linking them to modelling data to show improvements in accessibility and mobility as potential solutions.

Social Issues for Early-Stage Assessments

An SIA undertaken at this phase may be of an individual project (including various concept options), or a group of transport projects in a programme to be implemented. In undertaking assessments, SIA practitioners need to be aware of the different spatial scales at which projects generate social impacts. That is, the benefits and harms that may be experienced at one spatial scale, for example, the metropolitan scale, may not be experienced at the local community scale, and plans would require different management strategies to follow-up at different scales. It also means that identifying vulnerable and marginalised groups of people at multiple spatial scales will be an important part of defining the area of influence.

Best-practice SIA calls for the identification and assessment of impacts on the most vulnerable and marginalised people, especially when evaluating the distributional effects of impacts and opportunities in an area of influence (Vanclay et al., 2015). For transport projects, this is particularly important because members of the affected community may have additional or different needs to other beneficiaries, and proposed developments or initiatives have the potential to exacerbate inequalities if these needs are not considered in a balanced way. Mobility and accessibility must be considered from the perspective of those less mobile, such as the elderly or those with disabilities, who may find it difficult to access new modes of transport. Transport accessibility improvements in policies and projects should be optimised to benefit those who are disadvantaged. In terms of the users of transport, there may be uneven gendered impacts related to travel patterns, for example, if transport is used by those with childcare responsibilities during off-peak times, accessibility to employment types dominated by one gender or the other, or safety fears, if travelling late at night or alone. Vulnerable and marginalised groups that are experiencing socio-economic disadvantage are also important to identify in transport planning, because these groups may become further marginalised if planning is inadequate. For example, it is well known that a lack of physical mobility is a significant contributor to increased social and economic inequality (Lucas, 2012). Transport planning must ensure that transport does not exacerbate socio-economic disadvantage through transport disadvantage or

transport-related social exclusion or transport unaffordability. Designing transport that focuses on quality of life, wellbeing and the ability to be mobile can strongly facilitate social inclusion (Stanley et al., 2011a, 2021).

In general terms, transport disadvantage refers to the difficulties that individuals may experience in accessing transport. Often these difficulties arise from the existing transport system and land-use patterns, but also from individual circumstances, such as those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, for example, Indigenous communities, low-income households, recent immigrants, households with young children, or people with a disability (Currie & Delbosc, 2011). Poor personal mobility and disadvantage may also arise from an individual's physical abilities to access transport and the cost of transport (which relates to their income and employment) (Antonson & Levin, 2020). People in remote and urban fringe areas may also experience transport disadvantage and become socially excluded due to the inadequate level of public transport services offered in lesser-populated areas (Lucas, 2012; Stanley et al., 2011b). The extent of social exclusion or inclusion also differs greatly depending on the social context and geographical contexts of countries (Antonson & Levin, 2020; Lucas, 2012).

Social exclusion is a multi-dimensional concept and generally occurs where individuals and communities face barriers in maintaining the usual social relationships and in undertaking the normal activities to participate in society. Social exclusion affects their wellbeing and quality of life, and the cohesion and equity of society as a whole (Levitas et al., 2007; Lucas, 2012; Stanley et al., 2011a, 2011b, 2021). Transport-related exclusion arises from an interaction between individual characteristics (e.g. age, disability, race), the local geographical area and the availability of transport, as well as the local and national economy (such as the availability of jobs) (Lucas, 2012). Transport disadvantage and social exclusion can also lead to transport poverty, which can influence accessibility to essential goods and services, lead to 'lock-out' from decision-making processes and planning, and can further exacerbate inequalities (Lucas, 2012). However, it is still possible to be socially included where there are high levels of local social cohesion and a strong sense of community. Community severance through transport infrastructure can also exacerbate social exclusion and damage social cohesion, and consequently negatively impact quality of life, physical and mental health (Boniface et al., 2015; Cohen et al., 2014). The above-ground physical infrastructure itself may also form a barrier in the landscape, reducing freedom of movement, which would require mitigation if not designed appropriately (Antonson & Levin, 2020). Identifying the potential for transport projects to exacerbate socio-economic disadvantage is part of the significant role that SIA and practitioners must play in this first phase of transport planning.

There are strong links between transport disadvantage, accessibility and human health, and subsequently on socio-economic inequalities in a community (Antonson & Levin, 2020; Boniface et al., 2015; Cohen et al., 2014). Social isolation and exclusion can result in a decline in mental health and wellbeing, which leads to an impact on mortality and morbidity rates (Boniface et al., 2015). The physical presence of transport infrastructure can have a negative impact on human health if it is not considered from a social perspective in early concept designs. The siting of infrastructure and its proximity to residential areas, and potential impacts on air pollution, safety around stations, and changes in road safety for cyclists, are all examples of how changes in the local environment may generate human health and other social impacts (negative and positive). Transport projects can also have a positive social impact on mental health and wellbeing. The walkability and aesthetics of neighbourhoods as well as the availability of infrastructure for active transport (e.g. walking, cycling) can also influence the health

and wellbeing of a community by strengthening community ties and encouraging physical activity, thus preventing physical and mental ill-health (Cohen et al., 2014).

The sustainability of transport and its relationship with environmental impacts such as climate change (which affects human health through increased natural disasters, heatwaves and spread of disease) also need to be considered during the early planning of transport projects (Cohen et al., 2014). There are several parts to the sustainability argument for switching away from a car-based mobility culture. For example, much research into transport disadvantage focuses on automobile dependence as the cause of disadvantage, thus contributing to the sustainability argument to reduce car use (Mattioli & Colleoni, 2016). Often the design elements and may address impacts or enhance sustainability are determined when transport is planned as part of an integrated development for a neighbourhood, suburb or city. In some instances, the greater purpose of the transport development is to contribute to addressing sustainability challenges. For example, a transport project proposed to meet the policy goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions might be the implementation of electric autonomous vehicles (de Paepe et al., 2021; Legacy et al., 2019). As such, there are both benefits and disbenefits to society that may arise from transport planning that may also be assessed in many forms of impact assessments, modelling and technical studies, but must be considered from a social impact and management perspective in SIAs during this first phase.

PHASE 2: DETAILED DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION PHASE (SIA AS THE IMPACT MANAGER)

Once transport projects move beyond the conceptual planning stages and into regulatory approvals, detailed design and construction planning, the impact footprint can be defined, and the social issues become more focused on the project's direct interface with communities. The living neighbourhoods where the development is proposed will begin to experience the more tangible impacts – the direct effects of the construction. In some cases, depending on whether or not public consultation has occurred in earlier strategic phases, this may be the first time affected communities will be hearing about the project or truly understand its impact on their lives. While there is still opportunity to address social impacts to support improved wellbeing and quality of life (such as through modifying the project's construction materials or methodology and minor route adjustments), addressing the wider societal issues and strategic goals and objectives considered in the early-stage planning are typically no longer the focus of project planning. This is because finance has been approved based on a single-concept design and financiers are generally not supportive of major design changes, especially those that would result in additional costs and project delays. Nevertheless, an SIA at this phase of the project must still include balanced assessment of the distribution of social benefits and costs, with reference to the needs of vulnerable and marginalised communities, and stakeholder engagement, in accordance with best practice guidelines (Vanclay et al., 2015).

Constructing transport infrastructure will generate social impacts that are typical of any type of large-scale construction project. The significance of those social impacts generated is highly dependent on the selected construction methodology and mode of transport. As with most infrastructure projects, during construction, social impacts can be temporary and short to medium term, depending on the size of the project. The largest transport projects, infrastructure megaprojects, can require up to 30 years to build, resulting in prolonged periods of impact

on affected communities (Flyvbjerg, 2014). Operational social impacts are largely dependent upon the original strategic goals and whether they have been met, as well as the legacy the construction phase of the project has left behind. The transport projects that have the most significant impacts during construction are usually those with the largest physical presence, namely road projects (for example, new motorways, road widenings, intersection upgrades, freight movements) and rail projects (for example, metro, light rail and heavy rail). The size of a construction footprint is typically larger than the project itself as there is additional space needed to manoeuvre construction equipment.

Table 5.1 presents a list of example questions that might be considered by practitioners preparing SIAs for typical large transport projects during this phase. It is based on the impact categories identified in Vanclay (2002). This list is not exhaustive, as each SIA will consider a wide range of issues depending on the local social and environmental context, and its relationship with the physical transport infrastructure, legal requirements, local and international guidelines, and the identified area of influence. The significance of impacts, in terms of duration and severity, is linked to the design of the project (whether it is an entirely new project or a modification) and its location within the environment (for example, urban or regional area, greenfield or brownfield site). A greenfield site, for example, may have low social impact and a high environmental impact, but there may be minimal social benefit initially if there is no population close by to utilise the transport. However, for major transport projects, property acquisition to obtain the land for the project generates the most significant direct social impacts (displacement and resettlement), with associated impacts upon health and wellbeing, social cohesion, and quality of life, depending on how these impacts are managed (Vanclay, 2017). Assessing the significance of these impacts is undertaken in accordance with international good practice guidance (Vanclay et al., 2015), financiers' guidance, and any local SIA or EIA guidelines that may be applicable.

Undertaking construction of transport projects, particularly public transport, requires that government decision-makers balance social priorities. A decision made in the greater public interest does not mean that the short-term impacts of construction or long-term impacts of operation should be accepted by the local affected community. SIA's role in the planning of transport projects is as much about managing the impacts as it is about identifying and assessing those impacts, especially as populations grow and the needs of communities change over time. Given the lengthy construction periods for transport projects, SIAs in the construction phase are opportunities to implement adaptive impact management. Once built, large transport infrastructure is almost always fixed in its alignment in space, with limited opportunities for change over time (due to significant re-design costs); therefore, monitoring and management of community interfaces is essential.

As the use of Social Impact Management Plans is not as common in the transport sector as in other sectors, such as mining (Franks & Vanclay, 2013; Suopajärvi & Kantola, 2020), community and stakeholder engagement plans and other environmental management plans (e.g. noise and vibration, air quality, and traffic management) play important roles in managing and monitoring the health and wellbeing of affected communities (Mottee et al., 2020b). Evaluating social impacts and opportunities at the project scale and strategic level as part of impact management and monitoring is essential for capturing and addressing the social impacts of transport. But undertaking ex-post assessments is not without challenges, both methodologically for practitioners and politically for decision-makers and financiers wanting to understand the value of their investment. The management strategies proposed in SIAs

Table 5.1 Social issues in transport

Social impacts	Example key questions in transport
People's way of life	How will the project influence accessibility and mobility of individuals and communities to access the services they need for daily life? Will it enhance opportunities, constrain or modify them?
Culture	Will the transport development impact upon the cultural value that communities place on local areas? Will the project result in a permanent loss of value?
Community	Will the transport development result in any community severance or loss of community cohesion through the presence of new infrastructure? Can social cohesion be enhanced through the provision of improved accessibility to services and facilities?
Political systems	Has the community been involved in the strategic discussions regarding the transport development? Do its members feel their voices have been heard and are their needs being met?
Environment	What direct impacts on the environment have been identified (such as to water quality, air, noise) that will result in impacts upon the community? How significant are these impacts to those affected?
Health and wellbeing	Will the transport development result in impacts on health and wellbeing, particularly those most vulnerable? Will the presence of the project (in construction or operational) result in prolonged impacts on mental or physical health and subsequently the wellbeing of a community or vulnerable individuals? Has pedestrian and user safety been considered in the design of the proposal?
Personal and property rights	Has property acquisition been avoided as far as possible? How do those impacted by acquisitions feel about the process, any compensation as part of the process, or will they be disadvantaged?
Fears and aspirations	Does the affected community have concerns about safety accessing, and living surrounding the new transport infrastructure? Will the project align with their future aspirations for the local area?

Source: The author, based on Vanclay (2002, 2003); NSW Department of Planning and Environment (2021).

and their subsequent management plans should focus on practical measures that involve and engage the community in monitoring to inform their adaptation. Follow-up monitoring of management strategies is also needed and established at the appropriate scale that aligns with the impacts identified (Mottee et al., 2020a; Pinto et al., 2019). If an impact will affect a local community, the management strategy and monitoring must target the local scale. Furthermore, projects require a financial commitment either through government approval processes or by funding from financiers. Follow-up is one of the weakest steps in SIA and in EIA of transport projects as best practice is frequently poorly implemented and follow-up studies are inadequately funded. This remains an ongoing challenge for practitioners (Kahangirwe & Vanclay, 2022; Mottee & Howitt, 2018; Pinto et al., 2019). However, follow-up is an essential part of facilitating SIA's role as the impact manager in this second phase of the transport planning lifecycle.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the two functions of SIA across phases of transport projects, the problem solver and the impact manager, were highlighted. As transport projects move from concept designs in strategic plans (Phase 1) to detailed design, construction and operation (Phase 2), SIA's role shifts from solving societal issues to managing impacts. In transport planning and policy, accessibility and mobility are key desired social outcomes, although approaches to their assessment in early project phases do not always involve engagement with affected communities and tend to focus on modelled techniques. Yet, the influence an SIA practitioner has in preparing an SIA during the first phase has the potential to be life-changing and city-shaping,

helping to design transport development that addresses socio-economic inequalities, transport disadvantage and social exclusion. Once a project moves into Phase 2, the role of the SIA becomes more about how to manage the interface between the project and its local social and physical environment and often forms part of a regulatory planning approval process. Where possible, in this second phase, negative social impacts are *avoided* by modifying the detailed design. The priority for SIAs during construction and operation then becomes how to *manage* the negative effects and enhancing local benefits.

While SIAs of transport projects have much potential to create benefits for society, SIA practice still faces systemic limitations to implementing good practice throughout project life-cycles (Mottee, 2022). Enhancing the capacity and influence of SIA practice in the transport sector, and its social problem-solving and management capability, requires that project managers, sponsors, financiers, decision-makers and SIA practitioners consider the following issues:

1. Timing: as early as possible, when a social problem is identified as a goal of the transport project in a strategic plan or business case.
2. Scale: whether the transport development will be creating benefits or negative impacts for the individual, community or society and how these people will be engaged in the process.
3. Evaluation and management: choosing an adaptive approach to assessing benefits or negative impacts, that recognises uncertainty, to manage changes over time.

Historical engineering-focused attitudes to transport planning are changing, as social issues are becoming more at the forefront of assessments, particularly with the decision-makers needing to work together to address the sustainability challenges we face as a global society. Demonstrating to transport project managers, financiers and decision-makers in the sector through SIA that transport initiatives have a significant influence on quality of life, wellbeing and the way society functions will ultimately improve the social outcomes from projects.

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6. The use of social impact assessment in mining projects

Nicholas Bainton and John Burton

INTRODUCTION

Mining is an industry that has been responsible for imposing devastating social impacts on many communities around the world. Simultaneously, mining is perhaps the industry where Social Impact Assessment (SIA) has been most applied. We've been studying the social impacts of mining for many decades. Our research has primarily been focused on Australia and the Pacific Region, especially Papua New Guinea (PNG), West Papua, the Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, and the Cook Islands. The experiences of mining across this region provide a basis to think through the challenges in understanding social impacts and undertaking SIA, especially in complex contexts. PNG, for example, has experienced some of the worst effects of large-scale mining (e.g. Banks & Ballard, 1997; IIED, 2002; UNDP, 2014), but this has also led to SIA practitioners developing a form of SIA specifically for areas with large populations of traditional landowners (Goldman, 2000; Banks, 2013). Conversely, in many other jurisdictions, SIA has often been regarded as an optional add-on to technocratic environmental impact assessment (EIA) (Vanclay, 2020). Drawing on our experience of conducting, managing, commissioning, and reviewing SIAs across this region, we discuss how SIA is used in the mining industry, some recurring challenges for SIA practice, and emerging directions and opportunities.

THE GLOBAL MINING INDUSTRY AND THE RISE OF SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Since the 1970s, a combination of geopolitical shifts and technological advances have progressively transformed the nature and scale of mining practices across the globe. With assistance from the World Bank, the legal framework of many countries has been revised to encourage foreign direct investment and the entry of multinational mining companies. Together, this has resulted in extensive exploration and project development throughout the world, but especially in Africa, Asia-Pacific and South America. Other changes in how mining is done and the implications for surrounding communities have also been occurring. In contrast to building new mining towns in remote areas to house a specially recruited workforce, which had been the norm up until the 1980s, mining companies began to seek alternatives, including 'fly-in, fly-out' (FIFO) arrangements, using a local workforce where possible, and automation (Holcombe & Kemp, 2019). To give some sense of this, in 1991, only about 12 per cent of Western Australia's mine workers commuted (Storey, 2001). By 2015, this had increased to 65 per cent, with the total workforce being three times the size (WALA, 2015). These changes have expanded the environmental and social footprint of the industry, created new resource

frontiers, and profoundly affected the positive and negative social impacts that are created by mining.

SIA started alongside EIA in the 1970s (Vanclay, 2020). By the 1980s, EIA had become a standard international requirement for new mines, and this generally included some consideration of social impacts, although this was done to varying extents. Mining companies tended to lag behind other sectors, and lacked awareness of the social impacts they were creating and the potential consequences to their industry (Joyce & MacFarlane, 2001; Joyce et al., 2018). Two landmark cases in PNG contributed to growing global public discontent with the mining industry: the Ok Tedi tailings saga (BHP); and the conflict associated with the Panguna copper mine on Bougainville Island (Rio Tinto), both of which are discussed below.

The global dissatisfaction with mining led the chief executives of the world's largest mining companies to initiate a review process to understand the social and political threats to their industry: first, the Global Mining Initiative (1998–1999); and then the Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development (MMSD) project (2000–2002), which comprised case studies, commissioned working papers, and held workshops and stakeholder consultations around the world, including PNG (Banks, 2001). One of the key working papers was on SIA (Joyce & MacFarlane, 2001). The final report of the MMSD, *Breaking New Ground: Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development* (IIED, 2002), was a 'game-changer' for the mining industry, leading to the establishment of guidelines for responsible practice and greater awareness of the social issues associated with mining (Buxton, 2012). The majority of the 200 or so MMSD working papers are available at: <https://www.iied.org/mmsd-working-papers>.

One outcome of the MMSD was the formation of the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM), a CEO-led leadership organization that seeks to promote more environmentally and socially responsible mining. ICMM publishes position papers and guidance documents on numerous social performance issues. Companies that join the ICMM must commit to a range of environmental, social, and governance good practice requirements, including respecting the human rights of local people and making a positive contribution to the communities living near their operations (<https://www.icmm.com/en-gb/our-principles>). They must also base decisions on valid data and sound science. This implies that SIAs must be carried out, and to a high standard. While this sounds promising, mining companies are still obviously cherry-picking what they report (Burton & Onguglo, 2017). The ICMM, dependent on membership fees, does not have a means of enforcing company obligations or fact-checking claims made in company sustainability reports. This highlights the limitations associated with soft regulation and voluntary industry initiatives (Dashwood, 2012). Owen and Kemp (2017) discuss this conundrum in terms of commercial activity being disembedded from societal constraints, and argue that a countervailing force is required to compel companies to behave.

Another driver for SIA in the mining industry are the requirements of the international financial institutions and the Equator Principles, with the Performance Standards of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) having become the 'gold standard' for social and environmental management (Vanclay & Hanna, 2019). As mines are often regarded as contributing to the economic and social development of the countries they are located within, mining developments are supported by the IFC, which is the private sector arm of the World Bank Group. Given the increasing number of banks signing up to the Equator Principles, the sustainability standard for the finance industry, mining companies borrowing from commercial banks are also likely to have to apply the IFC Performance Standards. In fact, even where a mining company does not need to raise external capital, given that the IFC performance

standards have become the industry norm, they are likely to be applied regardless of the situation.

Most national, state, and provincial governments trail far behind industry and the multi-lateral institutions in keeping their regulatory arrangements consistent with appropriate environmental, social and heritage management expectations. For example, the destruction of the Juukan Gorge rock shelters by Rio Tinto in May 2020 exposed the fact that Western Australia, a supposedly progressive jurisdiction, was relying on 50-year-old heritage legislation (Bainton et al., 2021), and had failed to implement adequate safeguards (Kemp et al., 2023). Across the world, some jurisdictions have technically competent procedures governing mining, whereas most do not. All struggle to integrate social and environmental protection legislation with mining laws. Enforcement is a weak point everywhere.

SOCIAL IMPACTS AND MINING

Nowadays, most large mining companies worldwide subscribe to a comprehensive set of social and environmental standards. A voluminous literature of policy briefs, how-to-do-it manuals, and case studies – e.g. by the ICM, IFC, and World Bank – ensures that there is guidance on all topics relevant to the mining industry. The IFC (2012) Performance Standards and the SIA guidelines of the International Association for Impact Assessment (Vanclay et al., 2015) provide frameworks for how SIA for mining projects should be carried out. While these would allow all social issues (Vanclay, 2002) to be considered, the actual practice of assessing and managing social issues is poor. Below, some of the common social issues and experiences from mining projects are discussed.

Gender, Inequality, and Influx

A key strategy for identifying critical areas of impact in a community is to start by looking at existing inequalities and social divisions. This is because any non-trivial exogenous change will accentuate existing inequality. At the household and community level, men and women experience the impacts of mining in different ways: men often gain the prestige and personal income of mining employment, while women take on a greater burden of family duties, especially when men are absent from the household for long hours, or weeks at a time in the case of FIFO operations.

Women also bear the brunt of the mining-associated changes that disrupt local gender relations. Women can be marginalised from agreement-making processes and political representation, whereas traditionally they had a strong say in the household economy. Women often miss out on monetary benefits when royalty and compensation lists are compiled in the names of men. Women can find they have unequal access to employment opportunities and business development support (Lahiri-Dutt & Macintyre, 2006; Lahiri-Dutt, 2011; Zimmer-Tamakoshi, 2021). Women are often the dominant users of ecosystem services, and can find themselves at a loss when basic environmental resources are degraded by mining (e.g. Columbia Law School, 2019).

Despite attempts by the global mining industry (e.g. Rio Tinto, 2009), the World Bank (2012), and other banks (Social Development Direct, 2020) to address the role of ‘women in mining’, mining company management teams often reinforce male economic privilege.

The rapid social changes associated with resource extraction frequently spur an increase in gender-based violence and human rights abuses. This can arise for several reasons, including: access to large amounts of disposable cash and new consumption patterns; the presence of predominantly male security forces; increased rates of alcohol consumption; changing notions of masculinity in response to unprecedented social changes; and, in some places, increased accusations of sorcery that target women, which may result from new uncertainties and tensions that accompany resource extraction projects (Human Rights Watch, 2010; Hemer, 2018).

Where mining operations are enclaves in areas otherwise deprived of economic opportunities, the surrounding communities are at high risk of uncontrolled in-migration, which can see thousands of migrants arrive seeking opportunities (see Chapter 26). These migrants typically exist outside local forms of social control (Bainton et al., 2017; Bainton & Banks, 2018). Beyond the physical impacts thousands of migrants have on land and local amenities, community members have variable attitudes to the migrants – embracing as kin those with whom they can reckon a connection, regarding as business partners those with whom they can find a beneficial relationship, and treating the rest as strangers to be avoided, feared, or accused of all manner of social ills (Bainton, 2017). When they join the mine workforce, migrants may experience their own forms of insecurity. At one large-scale mine in PNG, contract workers were a hidden part of the workforce, vulnerable to wage theft and non-payment of entitlements, and living in squalid conditions without water or sanitation.

Conflict, Environmental Harm, and Failures: Panguna and Ok Tedi

Large-scale mining projects have become notorious for their association with conflict, from civil wars through to everyday grievances (Ballard & Banks, 2003). Rio Tinto's Panguna copper mine on Bougainville Island, PNG, is at the civil war end of the spectrum. Although several anthropologists were consulted for advice, with the mine commencing operations in 1972 (i.e. around the same time SIA was being established), no formal SIA process was undertaken. Nevertheless, the objections of the customary landowners had been widely reported in the media from 1966 to 1969. The mine opened just as PNG moved to self-government in 1972.

The social and environmental impacts of the mine amplified existing processes of social change, which gave rise to periodic protests and the sabotage of mine infrastructure in 1988, and then to full-scale armed conflict across Bougainville from 1989 until around the 1997 Bougainville Declaration, which led to the Bougainville Peace Agreement of 2001 (UNDP, 2015). Estimates of the number of deaths are difficult to separate from the political contexts in which they have been uttered, but it is safe to say that the conflict resulted in thousands of deaths of Bougainvilleans, out of a pre-conflict population of approximately 180,000 people, as well as the deaths of some 300 members of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force (Regan, 2017, 2018). The PNG government also implemented a blockade of Bougainville for about ten years, which deprived them of medical care, pharmaceuticals etc., leading to thousands more dying of illness and treatable injuries.

Peace (of sorts) eventually prevailed, but till now there has been no serious proposal to reopen the mine. Bougainvilleans voted 97.7 per cent in favour of independence from PNG in 2019, but are split on the future of the mine (Regan et al., 2022). While an SIA process should be a precursor to any proposal, this would convey the presumption that a project was being planned. A general limitation of SIA work is that it is predominantly conceived in the expecta-

tion of the project proceeding. Where a history of conflict places this in doubt, undertaking an SIA is unlikely to yield meaningful insights, and probably would cause harm.

In comparison to Panguna, Ok Tedi represents a middle-range resource conflict, limited to disputation in the courts over environmental harms and the amount of compensation. Ok Tedi was developed by a BHP-led consortium in the early 1980s. SIA studies were undertaken, but what began as a symbol of national optimism soon became a symbol of extractive excess. Prior to commencement of operations, the tailings dam was destroyed by a landslide in early 1984. Given the importance of the mine to the national economy, the mining agreement was amended to allow the mine to discharge 90,000 tonnes of tailings per day directly into the river system, with no new SIA of the changed operational plan (MMSD, 2002).

The Ok Tedi mine commenced operation in May 1984. After ten years of severe damage to the river and riverine plains, writs were filed against BHP in May 1994 in the Supreme Court of Victoria (Australia). A legal battle was waged over two years, and in June 1996, BHP was ordered to: pay compensation (AU\$110 million, and a further \$40 million to the worst-affected areas); pay all legal costs; cease putting tailings in the river; withdraw all hostile/counter legal actions in Australia and PNG; undertake environmental remediation works; and construct a pipeline (estimated cost of \$400 million). BHP's behaviour during the legal process was appalling, with significant instances of harassment, intimidation, and a media mis-information campaign being waged. Further legal action was needed in 2000 to force BHP to comply with the expected environmental remediation (MMSD, 2002, pp. H20–H21). BHP quit the project in 2001.

Many writers have inquired into the deeper causes of conflict, beyond the proximate causes that spark particular episodes. A standard starting point to understand specific conflicts is to look at the historical and political contexts, and the agreements that companies brokered with local interests (Ballard, 2002; Bridge, 2004; Allen, 2018). Mining conflicts do not have a single cause (Kirsch, 2014), although inequality is a key factor. Inequality has many aspects, including: the resilience of customary social stratification (Burton, 2018); various kinds of 'sociological time-bombs' that are created around mining projects (Filer, 1990); and unfair mining agreements that are implemented without proper engagement or understanding of their ramifications (Hemer, 2016).

The significance of *ethnic identity* in the genesis of conflict – such that particular groups are allegedly disadvantaged while others reap mining benefits at their expense – has historically been asserted (e.g. Griffin, 2005). Perhaps a better way to frame the analysis of inter-group contestation around mining projects is to see these contestations as ultimately about who locally can claim ownership of land and natural resources, and how governance institutions help some sections of the wider community assert their rights, but hinder others from doing so, and thus determine who is able to access new kinds of wealth (Banks, 2008).

The most common forms of conflict are less spectacular than the ones we have already noted and can be classed as low-level conflicts. This type of daily conflict has been observed in many jurisdictions and can include routine struggles over the governance of benefits, family disputes and the breakdown of social relations, various kinds of social protest (Li, 2015; Hanna et al., 2016), and forms of 'paper warfare' or 'paperfare' (Lea et al., 2018) as Indigenous representative bodies become locked in bureaucratic struggles with mining companies over specific issues. These forms of conflict are rarely captured in SIA studies, but often consume significant time and resources and erode community wellbeing (Vanclay & Hanna, 2019).

There are many stressors for poor communities living adjacent to mining projects, including those invoked by contested land ownership, and complications associated with the incorporation, representation, and participation of landowner groups in agreement-making processes. Consistent themes are poor social development outcomes due to poor governance of development. Efforts to use mineral wealth for poverty reduction have been universally disappointing (UNDP, 2014; Pandey & Howes, 2022). The common assumption that large-scale mining brings social and economic benefits to nearby communities does not hold when the government neglects its responsibilities (Everingham et al., 2021). The recurrent picture of development failures around large mines has implications for how SIA should be approached. The old form of SIA was framed in terms of regional planning, where development was taken as a given and the main theme was how the project should proceed without leaving unprepared, marginalised people behind. However, it is clear that all members of mine-affected communities stand to be left behind if appropriate policy settings and good governance arrangements are not in place, and when corrective actions are not taken in a timely manner benefit-sharing agreements start to fail or unexpected negative social impacts appear.

How can we tell when an agreement is going off track? A pre-project SIA must endeavour to make use of solid baseline socio-economic data so that improvements in sentinel development indicators, from mundane things like school attendance or immunisation rates to more complex things like reliance on subsistence agriculture, can be tracked. Unfortunately, numerous SIA reports can be cited where embarrassingly poor baseline data has been presented, perhaps excused with a ‘better data will be collected later’ disclaimer. But once an SIA has been completed, and permitting has been achieved, years may elapse before any more impact assessment is commissioned by the operator. As four gold mines in PNG opened between 1984 and 2009 that had operational-phase social monitoring programmes, 7.5 years elapsed, on average, between the completion of the pre-project SIA and the start of the social monitoring programme. Three other active mines never had any social monitoring.

The rise of artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) activities around large-scale mines is usually a signal that conventional economic development is failing (Hilson, 2009). When ASM populations compete for land and resources around mining locations, a complex set of conflicts and impacts can be generated. At Porgera in PNG, alluvial gold mining predated the modern gold mine, but since its construction ASM has been a driver for in-migration, leading to conflict in the courts, and clashes with the mine’s security personnel (Human Rights Watch, 2010; Bainton et al., 2020).

Agreements and Resettlement

In some jurisdictions, it is now common practice for mining companies to implement an Impacts and Benefits Agreement with local mine-affected communities (O’Faircheallaigh, 2016; see Chapter 34). These agreements typically outline the range of compensation and benefits that will be provided to communities in exchange for access to their lands and resources. Ideally, these agreements are informed by impact assessment studies, whereby community members are fully informed of the range of costs and impacts that will be imposed on them by the project. These agreements are formed through processes of negotiation that are characterised by unequal access to power, resources and knowledge (Owen et al., 2021).

At the Lihir gold mine in PNG, the primary agreement (locally known as the Integrated Benefits Package) has been subject to ongoing tensions and low-level forms of conflict, both

within the community, and between the community, company, and government (Bainton, 2021). The unequal distribution of benefits arising from this agreement, and the failure of company and government to honour their commitments, has been the source of continuing divisiveness (Bainton & Macintyre, 2021). A specific issue relates to the resettlement of two villages, Putput and Kapit. The residents of Putput were resettled onto their own customary land adjacent to the mining project, and within easy reach of the mining town and its services. The terms of their agreement gave them good access to services, livelihood support, new housing, and business contracts. In contrast, the residents of Kapit were subject to a rushed resettlement process when the need for their land was realised late in project planning. The flawed decision to disperse Kapit families among several villages on other people's customary land far from the mining town led to deprived access to services, farmland, and the development opportunities that the Putput village community enjoyed. It entrenched social, economic, cultural, and political disadvantage and households experienced multiple deprivations affecting their wellbeing (Bainton et al., 2022).

Mine Closure and Life after Mine

Mines have a notional lifespan after which they run out of commercially recoverable ore. But mine closure is not necessarily a singular discrete act. With fluctuating commodity prices, during downturns a mining company might decide to have a 'slow-down' or to put the mine 'on ice', to be revived later when prices pick up again. This is very disruptive to local communities. Temporary closure can also happen while there are disputes between local communities and the mining company. When final closure happens, a key concern is what this will mean for the ongoing viability of the local community. This is especially an issue for resettled communities. In many cases, mining companies have simply abandoned their operations to avoid the costs of mine closure (Keeling & Sandlos, 2017).

Ideally, mine closure is a carefully planned process that fully considers the social as well as environmental aspects of closure well in advance of the closure date so that all necessary preparations can be enacted. The ICMM now encourages its member companies to undertake a form of 'integrated' closure planning, and it has provided guidance on how to consider mine closure from the early stages of project development (ICMM, 2019). It is increasingly a requirement at the pre-approval project planning stage for a mine proponent to have to submit a 'Conceptual Mine Closure Plan' along with the ex ante SIA and EIA. While these early closure plans may set out the proposed phases of mining and intended physical rehabilitation of mined areas (to varying degrees of specificity and credibility), they do little more than state the company's aspirational goals, especially in terms of the social aspects of mine closure. Broadly speaking, the social aspects of mine closure encompass the socio-economic, political, cultural, and institutional impacts that arise at the end of the project lifecycle as well as the planning and management processes that are required to mitigate these impacts, with an overarching emphasis on the post-mining future (Bainton & Holcombe, 2018). The social impacts of closure are often connected to the level of local dependency upon resource extraction for the community's economic base, infrastructure, service provision, and governance; in other words, the extent to which the community is dependent upon the operation of the mining project. The failure to understand and assess the impacts of closure and develop integrated mine closure plans exacerbates the worst effects of mining long after the mine is closed.

ISSUES AND SHORTCOMINGS OF SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT IN A MINING CONTEXT

The SIA Process

SIA seeks to identify and manage social risks and impacts. The objective of harm avoidance is fundamental, and an SIA should provide guidance on how to minimise impacts. A good SIA will also identify opportunities to enhance benefits (Vanclay et al., 2015). For example, an SIA might do basic modelling of prospects for local employment, spin-off businesses, and the benefits likely to accrue from improvements in infrastructure and services. In jurisdictions where resource rents flow to community members, an SIA might also consider how the orderly and fair delivery of project benefits can be ensured.

Many things shape SIA today, including regulatory requirements, industry standards, conditions of finance, and the expectations of fellow SIA practitioners, international NGOs, and informed local communities. These might be termed ‘constraining factors’. However, SIA can become so fixated by constraining factors that there is little time to present an informed picture of what will actually happen to local communities. At worst, SIA and related activities like cultural heritage surveys can become nothing more than box-ticking exercises. If this happens, there is limited value of the SIA to the project or to local communities. Predictably, it would result in reports that are barely read, other than to check they are legally compliant, and social management plans that are woefully inadequate.

There are several aspects of the mining context that limit the ability of SIAs to be effective. For example, an exhaustive pre-project SIA process may be followed, but changes to the configuration of the project after its initial approval can leave the SIA making the wrong forecasts, even with new SIA work at each stage. An example of this is the McArthur River zinc mine in Australia’s Northern Territory, which opened in 1995. Impact statements were produced in 1992, 2006, 2012, and 2018 as the project underwent various expansions and reconfigurations. At this mine, an Aboriginal stone tool quarry has become the focus of contestation between the project operator and the traditional owner groups, the Gurdanji, Yanyuwa, Yanyuwa-Marra, and Garrwa peoples. The stone tool quarry was outside the area covered by the original survey, but later came to be in the path of planned rock dump expansions. After years of lobbying, it was finally protected after an inquiry by the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority, some 30 years later. If the area of impact study of the original study had not been so narrow, its statement that ‘all Aboriginal sacred sites ... in the vicinity of the project area ... will be avoided’ would have had more validity (Green & Kerins, 2021, online).

How all parties view the purpose of SIA, and from what perspective, makes a significant difference to whether an SIA is well or poorly received. On the one hand, developers may prefer to emphasize ‘value’ or ‘net positive benefit’ because it is in their self-interest to get a mine approved. On the other hand, community groups may see the SIA process as a means to address inequalities between the community and the company, or between the community and the government. Above all, an SIA will serve no one well if it is archived as soon as permitting is achieved. It can only play a role in harm reduction and benefit enhancement if its findings are translated into operational policies once a mine opens. Unfortunately, all too often original data and reports are consigned to the archives once operations have commenced. Sometimes, they are retrieved when impacts and grievances threaten operations and there is a need to commission new studies to understand what went wrong.

The Scope of Social Impact Assessment

The conventional focus and scope of extractive sector SIAs is often geared towards impacts and consequences, overlooking root causes or source issues. This happens when an SIA looks at the impact that will be created by the in-migration of large numbers of people, but fails to look at the broader and historical socio-economic conditions that drive population movement. This often means that the focus of action is directed towards limiting impacts, or mopping-up the effects of these impacts, rather than dealing with risks at source. A focus on source requires a far higher degree of interdisciplinarity than currently seen in SIA practice. For instance, with tailings management, SIA practitioners would need to interface with tailings specialists to be able to understand a dam breach analysis and associated source issues, and then figure out consequence and impact (Kemp et al., 2021).

Another set of scoping factors relate to the spatial and temporal dimensions of mining projects. SIAs are often constrained by the mining company's notion of their lease area and proceed with an inadequate understanding of the project footprint and of the multitude of interests in the site, including from those outside the designated area of influence, for example, Traditional Owners who reside in urban areas. These might be the people who have the greatest interest in the land, even if they are no longer residing there.

Temporal dimensions relating to the project lifecycle are also an issue. Since SIAs are usually undertaken at the pre-permitting phase (or the start of the project lifecycle), there is often less attention placed on the latter phases of the project lifecycle, such as closure. The limited spatial and temporal foci serve to truncate the 'social' in impact assessment. Related to this is the question of how SIAs in mining are best scoped: should they take a generalist approach, should they incorporate specialist studies, and, if so, should the specialist studies occur in parallel or sequentially? For example, how do specific issues like in-migration, gender, human rights, livelihoods, climate change, resettlement, and artisanal and small-scale mining feature in the SIA – as 'chapters' or separate specialist studies? How will the SIA relate to other impact studies like health assessments and human rights impact assessments? How are the results of all these studies going to be integrated? There are no right answers to these questions, but they need to be considered and worked through each time an SIA is scoped (Kemp & Vanclay, 2013).

Ethics and Transparency

There are many ethical dilemmas in SIA work (Howitt, 2005; Baines et al., 2013; Vanclay et al., 2013). There are power asymmetries between the SIA team and local communities, and with the mining company. There are many issues around informed consent, disclosure of findings, and reporting of potential harms. There is often a lack of transparency in SIA work (and sometimes dishonesty), particularly relating to the adequacy of the scope, methods, and data used, and how predictions were made. Other issues relate to SIA in conflict situations, the adequacy of community participation, and accountability, especially in relation to the company acting on the findings. Unfortunately, some SIAs are commissioned and completed with little consideration for research ethics. Although the International Association for Impact Assessment has a code of conduct for members, and SIA practitioners often identify with discipline-based professional associations and will seek to observe their notions for ethical practice, it is largely up to individual practitioners to uphold these standards. Problems can

arise as a result of the power differences between project proponents and consultants. To secure contracts to do SIA work, consultants may have little room to negotiate ethical considerations. Pressure to win the bid and to get the job done can compromise ethics.

SIA findings are often treated as being commercial-in-confidence by commissioning organisations. This can lead to situations where the SIA findings and reports are not accessible to members of the affected communities. An ethical principle is that the results of research should be published (at least shared with research participants) regardless of the nature and direction of results. In other words, if SIA practitioners discover that a mining company's operations will cause severe social impacts and/or breach human rights standards, they must not be prevented from saying so. Unfortunately, it remains unclear how practitioners can ensure that they remain free to make such disclosures.

Baselines Perpetuate Unacceptable Conditions

SIA can inadvertently reproduce existing forms of disadvantage. The conventional approach to SIA is to document the existing socio-economic conditions within which a proposed operation is to occur, assess its likely impacts and identify strategies to minimise and mitigate these negative effects. This baseline is then meant to be used to evaluate ongoing impacts from the operation, both positive and negative. If the net social impact of the mining operation is expected to be positive, then the impact assessment process would probably recommend that the mine proceeds. This approach is underpinned by a primary focus on the social impact of the proposed mining operation, rather than the wider social, cultural, economic, political context in which mining activities will occur. However, for many communities, especially Indigenous peoples, the underlying conditions are unacceptable. Legacies of dispossession and economic and political marginalization have often led to significant social and economic disadvantage, relative to mainstream populations, particularly in settler nations (Bainton, 2020).

In many developing country settings, and in some post-settler contexts, rural, Indigenous, and land-connected peoples may have very limited access to economic development opportunities and social services, and consequently face many hardships and barriers to full actualisation. These conditions are not simply a baseline against which subsequent changes created by the mining operation should be measured and deemed positive or negative (O'Faircheallaigh, 2011). Rather, these conditions constitute a fundamental problem in themselves, and local communities will judge the SIA and the proposed mining operation in terms of its potential to transform existing social realities. Thus, in these kinds of contexts when there is a greater focus on net positive benefits, the specific conditions and impacts experienced by some stakeholders, like Indigenous landowners, may be overlooked or given insufficient attention. Failure to attend to this has often meant that the impacts of a mining project are more severe than predicted for some groups exacerbating an already unacceptable situation, while an image of net positive benefits is maintained. A focus on net positive impact can mask over the extent to which some groups still carry or pay a massive cost to access project-related benefits, and that project-related benefits do not have an equal level of impact among all beneficiaries.

EMERGING PRACTICES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

SIA has not been adequately or consistently applied in the mining industry. Nevertheless, there are some emerging practices and opportunities for SIA. In appropriate contexts, community-controlled SIA can redress the imbalances discussed in this chapter. Community-controlled SIA places communities at the centre rather than at the margins of the SIA process and can be used to inform the negotiation of binding agreements that should be the basis of the ongoing management of impacts and distribution of benefits (O’Faircheallaigh, 2017).

A community-controlled impact assessment typically has the following features (Lawrence & Larsen, 2017; O’Faircheallaigh & MacDonald, 2022):

- It will be overseen by a community representative body, based on terms of reference endorsed by the community.
- It is conducted by a team of SIA specialists selected by the community and involves local researchers and informants (a Community SIA Team).
- The role of the SIA specialists is to advise on appropriate methods, provide training for local team members, and help secure and manage funding, and advise on technical SIA matters. The SIA specialists also ensure that important community perspectives and knowledge are incorporated into the assessment process.
- Information requirements are usually established in an iterative manner with community members.
- The form of communication is culturally appropriate, and engagement occurs in multiple phases in a meaningful manner. The engagement process may also double as a process of consensus making.
- Adequate time and resources are provided to ensure community review, comment, and feedback cycles on the draft report.

In some cases, community-controlled SIAs are conducted independently from government and project SIA approval processes, and then used as a basis for negotiating with developers for benefits and development support. In other cases, arrangements are made so the community-controlled component of an SIA is inserted into the regulatory process as part of the proponent’s overall impact assessment. A hybrid model is where Community SIA and Proponent SIA teams work on parallel tracks, coordinating their findings on a regular basis. They might divide up the list of tasks, such that a Proponent SIA team might conduct economic modelling while a Community SIA team undertakes field mapping of cultural sites. Either way, the overall objective is to enhance community participation and empowerment in the SIA process.

Another issue to consider is how SIA contributes to development objectives. All development projects should be based on a theory of change (Vanclay, 2015). This should also apply to mining projects. Governments and developers might hold a theory change that looks like this: building this mine will create jobs and services and boost economic growth. Local communities often have their own theory of change. For example, agreeing to this mine will deliver our dreams of modernity (e.g. Bainton, 2010). Likewise, SIAs also invoke a theory of change (sometimes only implicitly), for instance, in recommendations about actions to mitigate negative impacts or to enhance benefits. Inattention to underlying assumptions, and

to how specific outcomes will be achieved, and the relationships between factors, will result in poor outcomes with the desired objectives not being achieved.

SIA should aim to be as explicit as possible about:

- the long-term sequence of project impacts that are expected;
- which project activities will have a positive benefit and why;
- the contextual factors in which positive and negative impacts will occur, and who all the actors are;
- how and why the project's strategy, activities and outputs will help to stimulate outcomes that contribute to positive impacts, and mitigate negative impacts.

Project proponents often make broad claims about the 'net positive benefit' of a project. These claims gloss over the complexities of development projects. SIA processes must interrogate the assumptions underpinning the particular vision of development promoted through these claims. While the net positive benefit concept persists in industry thinking, the international community moved on some years ago and now 'Leave No One Behind' is a core principle of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. 'Leave No One Behind' means that any negative impacts on local communities are unacceptable if they are conceived of as balanced out by positive impacts, but where these are enjoyed by other people or fail to eventuate because the project design has changed or a third party has defaulted on its commitments.

A poorly articulated theory of change will see statements like, 'The project will provide increased local employment opportunities.' Promises of this nature are meaningless at the local level if the kinds of jobs on offer cannot be performed using the skill sets of people in the existing community. Conversely, a well-articulated theory of change will accommodate the changes needed to promote the interests of the least advantaged (e.g. in this instance, industrial training and livelihoods assistance) and can be a useful tool to help frame SIA work and to ensure the SIA findings are credible and relevant to all stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

When done properly and when all social and environmental impacts are carefully managed, mining projects have the potential to contribute to national and local development, as well as to the global need for minerals and metals. However, the mining industry's record is very poor, and instances like the two cases considered in this chapter, Ok Tedi and Panguna, are far too common. Instead of being a force for good, most mining projects have brought considerable harm to local environments and to local communities. Addressing the legacy issues of some mines may even cost more than the value they created. Social impact assessment has an important role to play in ensuring that mining projects contribute to local development in a fair and equitable way. Therefore, SIA must ensure that it does not become a box-ticking exercise or be seen simply as a legitimating action to assist damaging projects gain permitting approval. The MMSD project and its report, *Breaking New Ground* (IIED, 2002), were revolutionary twenty years ago, but unfortunately, not all recommendations have been fully implemented and there are still too many instances of bad behaviour by mining companies.

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7. The use of social impact assessment in agricultural projects requiring large-scale land acquisition

Piers Gillespie

INTRODUCTION

Across the world, agricultural development (agri-development) remains one of the main means to reduce extreme poverty, boost shared prosperity, and feed a growing global population. In 2016, more than 65 per cent of poor working adults made a living through agriculture (World Bank, 2021), and the sector is three times more effective in raising the incomes of people who are poor than growth generated by other sectors (Townsend, 2015). Although many national governments underline the importance of the agricultural sector, there is inconsistency in their approaches to large-scale agri-development. Some governments have embarked on ambitious plans to provide support and formal property rights to smallholders, while other governments have pushed for 'de-agrarianisation' in favour of economic development from sectors such as manufacturing, tourism, and industrialisation (Hall et al., 2011; Anseeuw & Baldinelli, 2020). Regardless of the government stance on large-scale agri-development, local communities are always deeply impacted whenever large-scale agri-development occurs. Based on the wide experience of the author in living and working at the village level in the Indonesian oil palm smallholder farmer supply chain, this chapter reflects on the need for a new approach to predicting and planning for the social impacts created by large-scale agri-development.

Using the global commodity of palm oil in Indonesia as an exemplar of the need for a new approach to improve social impact planning as part of agri-development, the chapter begins by looking at how particular community groups fare better than others whenever large projects are dropped into rural communities. Although the processes of inclusion and exclusion and winners and losers in rural development projects are well known, this is seldom considered when the impacts of agri-development are assessed. The chapter then looks at how conventional approaches to agri-development fail to properly plan for the diverse social impacts that occur. It focuses on how the local political economy and the framing of participation ignore many of the critical discussions that a holistic social impact assessment (SIA) would uncover. The chapter then briefly outlines the oil palm industry in Indonesia before focusing on how rural communities are affected by large-scale palm oil development. It also provides an overview of conventional SIA requirements for plantation-scale oil palm development in Indonesia.

The chapter considers how a Social Framework approach (Smyth & Vanclay, 2017) can effectively uncover local community and social impacts. The Social Framework is an accessible practical tool that can be used to understand and represent the local context and ensure that the social impacts on the main components of people's wellbeing are considered. The chapter concludes by suggesting that a Social Framework approach embedded early and

regularly reconsidered throughout the project lifecycle will support communities and small-holder farmers impacted by agri-development and create improved praxis to plan for intended development outcomes.

AGRI-DEVELOPMENT AND EXCLUSION

Underpinning large-scale agri-development are land access and property rights: who have them, who can get them, and who are denied them. These realities directly affect the local social impacts for rural communities. Hall et al. (2011) used the term ‘exclusion’ to denote situations where large numbers of people lack access to land, or are excluded from mechanisms where major actors are able to control large areas of land. There are four components to the exclusion process: regulation; force; the market; and legitimation, meaning how the process of exclusion is legitimised (Hall et al., 2011). How these components interrelate influences how the social impacts of large-scale agri-development are felt by rural communities.

Large projects are often justified as being in the national interest; however, Cernea (as cited by Smyth & Vanclay, 2017, p. 65) has argued that ‘the outcome is an unjustifiable repartition of development’s costs and benefits; some people enjoy the gains of development, while others bear its pains.’ The exclusion process creates diversity and differentiation of local agri-development outcomes. Agricultural change is long-standing in Southeast Asia, and has created quite differentiated local outcomes. In rural settings, distinct classes of landlords, tenants, and landless workers have existed for centuries, and despite popular idioms of ‘moral economies’ or ‘shared poverty’, smallholders routinely exclude kin and neighbours from access to land (Hall et al., 2011). Exclusion from land in the name of development is also not new (Vanclay, 2017). Social scientists ‘have long acknowledged the social nature of property: that it is not solely a relationship between people and things, but a relationship between people, embedded in a cultural and moral framework, a particular vision of community’ (Li, 1996, pp. 501–502). Recognition of the social nature of property has many implications for practice, but up to now, this has not influenced the planning and preparation of large-scale land-use change.

One reason why large agri-land and natural resources development has been inconsistent and controversial is its local-level political-economic nature. Access to land, water bodies, forests, and other natural resources is necessary for many livelihood activities, yet it is also necessary for large-scale agri-development. An in-depth understanding of land tenure arrangements that captures all interests and competing demands relating to land ownership and land use is essential for the land acquisition process, especially to minimise disputes, elite capture, and project delays (Smyth & Vanclay, 2017). This process of unpacking and understanding seldom occurs.

Exclusion is related to the ways in which rural communities are enabled to participate (or not) in development. Li (2007) discussed a fixation with participation in rural development: how it largely directs a focus on the conduct and perceived errors of rural communities and individuals, leaving the underlying political economic inequalities largely unaddressed. When participation is only utilised in a generic, formulaic, or statutory way, it becomes a tool that contributes to a failure to unpack the critical socio-political questions that are fundamental to understanding how to generate better local outcomes. This is why understanding social impacts in agri-development projects is essential. The failure to consider how people are

affected by agri-development supports the perpetuation of what Ferguson (1994) called the ‘anti-politics machine’, in which questions of a political or power nature are continually sidelined. Li (2007, pp. 276–277) explained how the use of this anti-politics machine ‘keeps the attention of many critics focused on the deficiencies of such schemes and how to correct them. Meanwhile, changing the conditions that position some social groups to accumulate while others are impoverished remains firmly off-limits.’

How local stakeholders interact influences how land is used and who benefits. In this way, power – ‘the probability that one actor within a social relationship would be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance’ (Weber, cited by Gillespie, 2012, p. 261) – is directly linked to participation, because whoever benefits most from the participative process is largely in control of local power relations. Power is an effective lens to use to understand land-use outcomes because: ‘Power analysis is thus critical to understanding the extent to which new spaces for participatory governance can be used for transformative engagement, or whether they are more likely to be instruments for reinforcing domination and control’ (Gaventa, 2004, p. 34). The way in which some issues and topics are consistently kept off-limits underlines the need for a new approach to planning and mitigating the local effects of large-scale plantation development.

OVERVIEW OF THE INDONESIAN PALM OIL INDUSTRY

Over the past 50 years or so, across South and Southeast Asia, millions of people have been lifted out of poverty due to agri-development (Townsend, 2015). In conjunction with this development there has been massive land-use change (Rigg, 2006). Perhaps the most obvious example of this land-use change is Indonesia with the vegetable oil crop, oil palm. Indonesia is the world’s largest producer of palm oil, and in 2018, its production of palm oil was around 38 million tonnes from over 14 million hectares (Purnomo et al., 2020). Palm oil and its derivative products contribute significantly to Indonesia’s national export earnings, adding over 10 per cent of total export earnings (Purnomo et al., 2020). Oil palm plays a key role in developing Indonesia’s rural areas as a generator of relatively unskilled employment in districts and communities that urgently need employment (Pahan, 2010; Gillespie, 2012). In rural villages, oil palm has contributed to growth in the local economy of villages by employing farmers, with over five million people working on Indonesian plantations and a further 16 to 20 million engaged in the upstream processing industry (Tim Riset PASPI, 2018). Oil palm brings benefits in terms of national revenue and regular income streams to the small and large landholders involved in its production (Pasaribu et al., 2020).

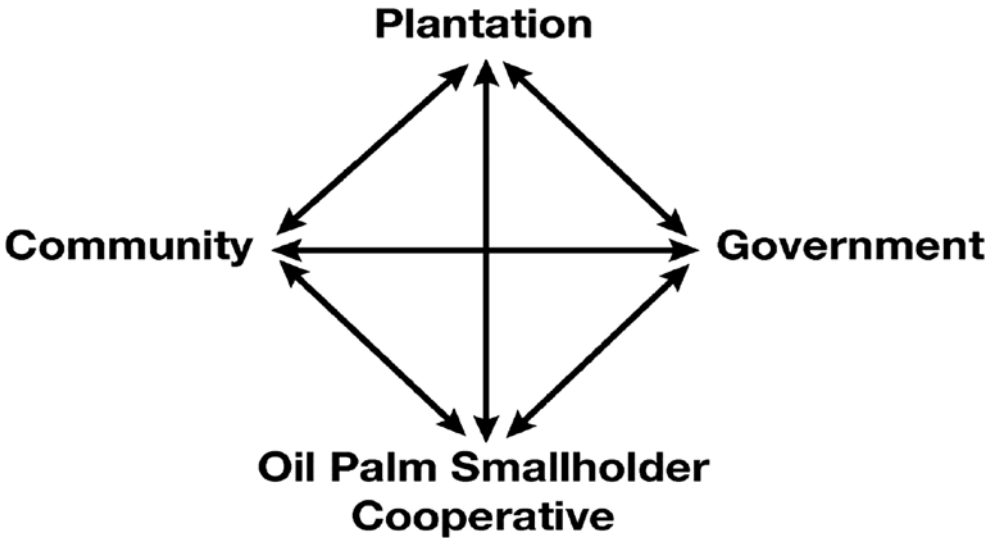
The expansion of oil palm plantations over the past 15 years has been controversial. Oil palm plantations are usually developed by converting agricultural land or forest into plantations, resulting in a reallocation of land and resources, leading to extreme changes in vegetation and local ecosystems, the resettlement and displacement of local communities, loss of traditional livelihoods, conflict between companies and local communities, exploitative labour relations, and concerns about child labour (Colchester & Chao, 2011; Meijaard & Sheil, 2019; Pasaribu & Vanclay, 2021).

Although improvements in yields and agri-technology have been a defining feature of the industry, one aspect that has not had substantial improvement is the way plantation companies and communities plan for the significant changes that occur locally when a large plantation

is established. Collectively, millions of local people have been impacted by plantations. Increasingly, it is the social and participatory aspects of establishment that are the most complex issues for estate managers and district governments to manage. One estate manager described how critical the process of negotiation with local communities is, explaining that:

If you are opening up land in Indonesia you need to be really clear in *sosialisasi* [community awareness-raising] about opening up the land. If you don't do this properly, then sooner or later you will be in trouble. (Discussion with plantation official, West Kalimantan, cited by Gillespie, 2010, p. 255)

Despite a predominant focus on agricultural and supply chain issues, the pivotal component of a successful plantation–community relationship relates to how effectively four key groups – the government, smallholder cooperative, community, and the oil palm plantation company – interact at the local level (Gillespie, 2010). In a simplified conventional plantation stakeholder map (Figure 7.1), the plantation company sits at the apex of engagement as all interactions follow from its establishment. ‘Government’ includes all levels of government. Officials at the sub-district level of government are particularly important, as they oversee each plantation company’s distribution of benefits and compliance with regulations. The smallholder cooperative is a key stakeholder, as plantations increasingly seek to interact with smallholders not as individuals, but collectively. The cooperative is often seen as the plantation company’s partner, which generates weakness in governance and poor representation due to patrimonialism. ‘Community’ includes smallholder oil palm farmers with their own small plots of land, plantation workers, and those in the community who are not oil palm smallholders but are affected by its presence.



Source: Gillespie (2010, p. 55), depicting common representations used in the oil palm industry.

Figure 7.1 *Conventional plantation stakeholder map at the local level*

Many community members have benefited from ongoing or irregular employment with plantations as planters, security staff, road repairers, mechanics, or other types of work. With the ability to earn income from a variety of sources – including in oil palm production, paid employment, or alternative cropping – many local individuals stand a good chance to improve their livelihood outcomes (Gillespie, 2010, 2012; Badrun, 2010). However, the benefits that flow from the plantation company are carefully distributed. Community members who decided not to join the plantation, or did not have enough land to surrender to the company as part of land-sharing arrangements, inevitably are not selected for the jobs on offer, and thus they are effectively discriminated against.

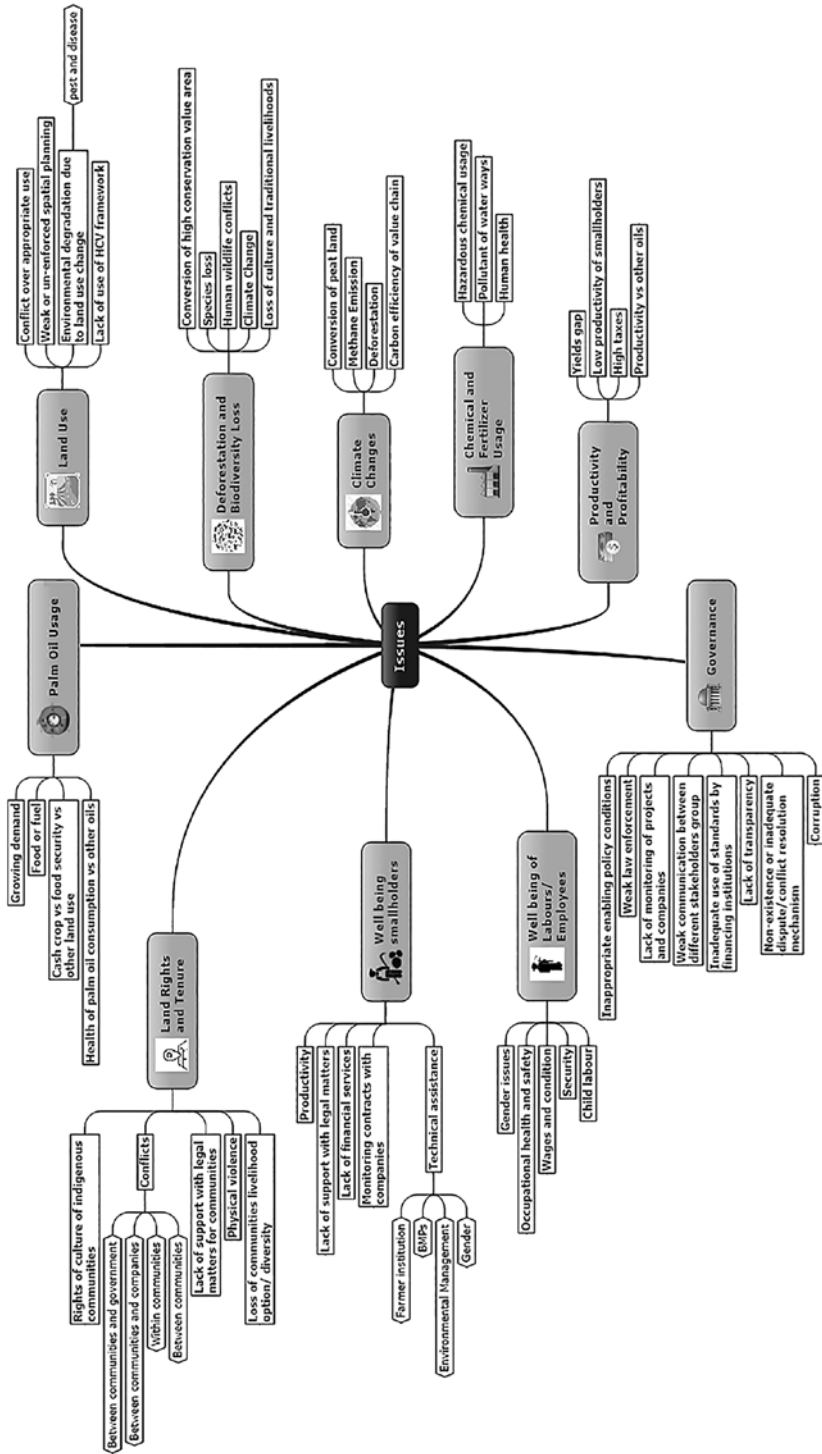
Farmers producing other commodities can find that their crops are deleteriously affected by the rat and pest plagues that oil palm brings, and Indigenous cultural leaders can find their traditional authority being eroded as an influx of cash leads to rapid changes in spending and values (Gillespie, 2010, 2012; McCarthy et al., 2012; Pasaribu & Vanclay, 2021). Increasingly, plantation-related conflict is seen at the intra-community level, where neighbours disagree over the benefits of oil palm for the community at large. Conflict also arises over land ownership, overlapping claims, and the legitimacy of land release to the plantation company. Profound diversity exists within community groups where oil palm is planted (McCarthy et al., 2012). The different outcomes are always site contingent, and underline the need for a more nuanced and deliberate planning and SIA process.

HOW RURAL COMMUNITIES ARE AFFECTED BY OIL PALM DEVELOPMENT

Over the past half century in Indonesia, while the amount of land that has been developed into plantation agriculture has been very large, the livelihood outcomes for individual farmers has varied a great deal. The research on community and smallholder farmer outcomes from agri-development has identified many negative impacts (McCarthy & Zen, 2009; Colchester & Chao, 2011; McCarthy et al., 2012; Jelsma et al., 2017; Pasaribu & Vanclay, 2020). Recent meta-analysis of the impacts of large-scale palm oil plantations on local communities reveals numerous issues of concern (Ayompe et al., 2021; see Figure 7.2). However, there are also local scenarios where outcomes can and have been economically positive in nature and significant poverty reduction has been achieved (Badrun, 2010; Edwards, 2017). A useful overview of the issues affecting communities when large-scale palm oil plantation development occurs is presented in Figure 7.2.

HOW POWER RELATIONS INFLUENCE LOCAL OUTCOMES

Due to the various local outcomes created by large-scale agri-development, it is important that the agri-company and state carefully plan, predict, and mitigate the social impacts that arise. One reason why rigorous SIA has not occurred in plantation development is the prevalent (mis)use of the ‘calming’ rhetoric of ‘participation’ and stakeholder engagement (Ijabadeniyi & Vanclay, 2020). In the upstream Indonesian oil palm industry, the language of participation enables a glossing-over of impacts and avoidance of deeper understanding of the effects of plantations on local communities.



Note: BMP = Better management practices (agriculture); HCV = High conservation value forest. Source: Author based on Teoh (2010) and other sources.

Figure 7.2 Mindmap of issues facing local communities

Many writers have been critical of participation in development (e.g., Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Kapoor, 2004, 2005). It is suggested that, far from being inclusive and bottom-up, 'normative participation' can actually reconfigure power and value systems in ways that can be fundamentally exclusionary. Consequently, much normative construction of participation in international development is applied without explicit consideration of ontological, epistemological, or methodological positions. The perpetuation of normative participatory processes used by plantations reinforces existing power imbalances because they fail to take into account the informal power relations that exist between the local stakeholders. Rural project developers tend to approach participation in a managerial sense, skirting around political issues such as the lack of access to land, which leads to the marginalisation of disadvantaged groups (Li, 2007). The importance of genuine meaningful participation (i.e., not normative conventional participation) is undervalued, and the amount of time and resources needed for effective engagement is always underestimated. In believing that they had followed the law and had legal rights to the land, many plantation companies feel 'put out' by having to re-engage and participate with local communities. Consequently, the engagement actions of many plantation companies are often simplistic and tokenistic.

The prevailing local economic structure and the dominant development narrative both play a role in creating unequal power relations. Many community members are disempowered from the beginning of the relationship with an agri company due to a lack of information, and they are unable to fully comprehend the changes that occur as a result of a plantation. Others are excluded from the clientelist relations that benefit some smallholders and overlook others (McCarthy & Zen, 2009). The highly sought-after positions, such as being trained as a mechanic or working in the office, are a rarity, and are given only to the few smallholders who have had more education or whose families are strategically important to the plantation, e.g. the son of the cooperative leader, the cousin of a local politician, the nephew of the district government official, etc. (Gillespie, 2010).

Due to poverty and the lack of genuine alternative development opportunities, many locals are interested in what is offered by a plantation: a job as a security guard; regular payments for arranging community compliance and engagement; training as a mechanic, etc. What is frequently observed in Indonesian plantations (and elsewhere) is a process of co-optation to ensure local support. It is noted that: 'if power is to be effective those subject to it must be rendered susceptible to its effects' (Lukes, 2005, p. 491). Thus, circles of interdependence are created between key local stakeholders and the plantation company. Inevitably, opportunities for the majority of locals are limited and are strategically given to key individuals as a key part of local 'engagement.' One smallholder from a Kalimantan plantation explained that:

When I see [plantation company ABC] I think of other bad plantations in [the district] because ABC worked through the village heads. They were more interested in getting the village head onside as an important figure before the actual farmers. All they did was control the head, but they were not looking at the rest of the animal. (Smallholder, West Kalimantan, 2009, in Gillespie, 2010, p. 213)

Participation is a tool of co-optation and control. Despite awareness of the unequal power balances that exist between stakeholders, planning for social impacts and how communities engage with the plantation is viewed as a technical matter. The main focus tends to be ensuring that correct procedures are formulated for bringing the parties into contact with one another (Pasaribu et al., 2020). The presumption is that if dialogue is properly organised, then consensus can be reached (Sultana et al., 2007; Gillespie, 2012). Much stakeholder engagement

rests on the erroneous assumption that, by identifying stakeholders and getting them to discuss issues, there is a chance of finding fair, consensus-based outcomes for all. The underlying messy issues of unequal power relations are inevitably glossed over.

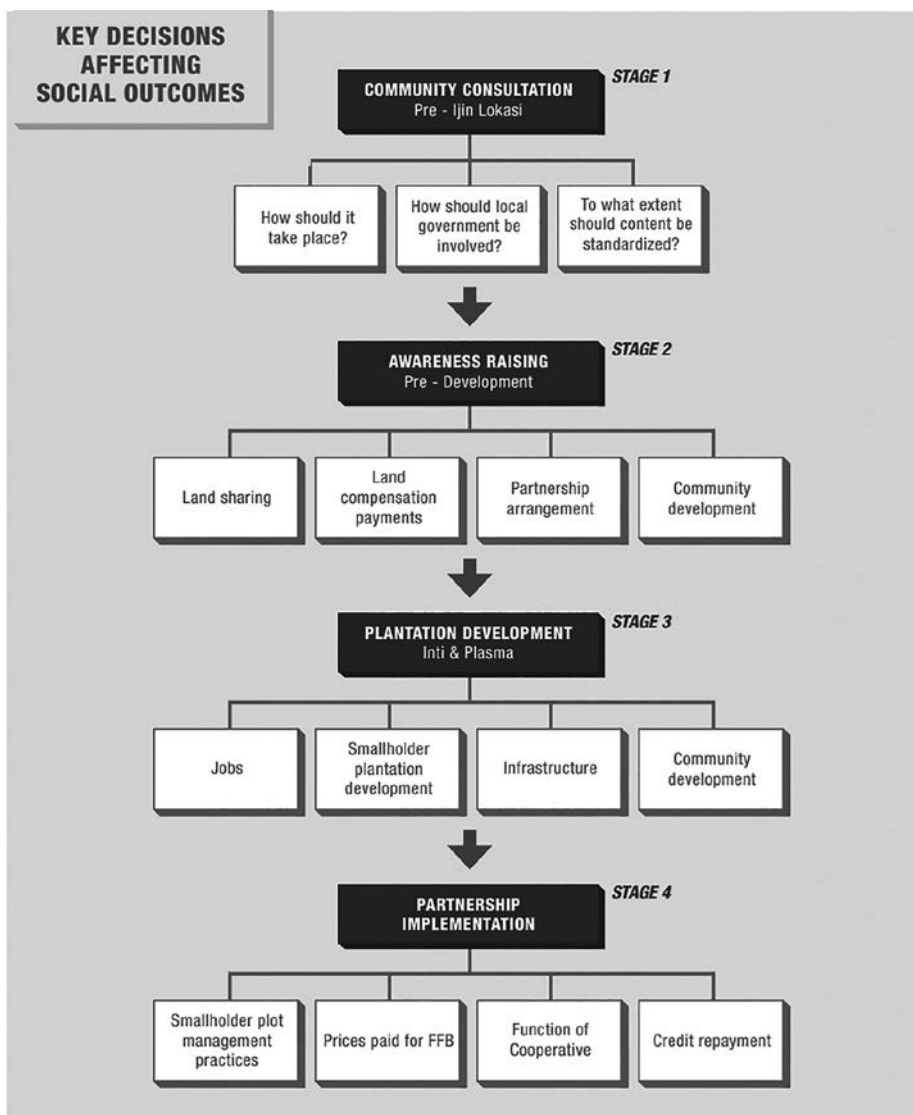
By avoiding a deeper analysis of how power relations influence social outcomes, plantation companies are in a position to secure the compliance of those they dominate in a geographical and literal sense. This is not necessarily a planned Machiavellian strategy by the plantations, but rather one of having a position in a local power structure, and where power is a capacity to be held and managed, rather than simply through the blatant exercise or use of that capacity (Lukes, 2005). The exercise of power through violence has been common across the frontier areas of Indonesia where plantation development has occurred, but another effective and common use of the local power imbalance is the ability of the company and the local government to 'sit' on local issues and concerns for months and years at a time. In this way, local community and smallholder concerns do not have to be addressed because the business risk of inaction to community concerns is minimal. Such an option appears in some plantations in the way they are able to choose not to act on, or can dismiss, smallholder complaints. An example of this is from one smallholder in West Kalimantan:

So many times we have said to the plantation company don't leave us alone here, we are ready to work, give us guidance on how to look after the trees, we have said this so often across a table that there is just no point in meeting again. I have all the original documents, all the instructions, and all the promises that the plantation made during *sosialisasi* [early engagement]. But hardly any of it has been realised. (Discussion with West Kalimantan smallholder, 2009, cited in Gillespie, 2010, p. 224)

CURRENT SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR OIL PALM PLANTATIONS

Indonesia uses a conventional approach to measuring rural development: rural poverty levels, mortality rates, access to healthcare, electrification, schooling levels, agricultural productivity, and so on. These indicators are often included as part of a large development project's environmental impact assessment (EIA). Agricultural companies are required to obtain local baseline data covering physical and biological parameters, as well as key social, economic, and cultural components. However, an analysis of social issues is not an assessment criterion in the EIA and any social metrics are subsumed as part of the wider EIA.

Once a draft EIA is completed as part of a project application, a local EIA evaluation commission is formed by the local government. It consists of relevant local experts, and public hearings are held. This leads to recommendations for improvement, rejection, or approval of the EIA, which are forwarded to the mayor or governor for the final decision. It is extremely rare for the EIA, and therefore the proposed oil palm project itself to be rejected. Although the EIA should be a powerful tool to democratise decision-making over natural resources and land development, in reality it is a formality to fulfil licensing requirements, leaving little space to influence or reshape development activities. The EIA process does not stimulate the key conversations that a competent SIA or Social Framework approach would generate. Figure 7.3 displays the key decisions affecting social outcomes when plantation development occurs. These decision points are not fleshed out as part of the EIA. A competent SIA would address these key matters with the local community from the early stages of the proposed agri-development, resulting in projects being more sensitive and cognisant of local socio-cultural conditions.



Note: Pre Ijin Lokasi = Before land and business licences are given; Inti = Company plantations; Plasma = Smallholder plantation, often surrounding the Inti plantations; FFB = Fresh fruit bunch; Cooperative = Farmer cooperative.

Source: Paoli et al. (2012), used with permission.

Figure 7.3 Schematic depiction of plantation company engagement with communities

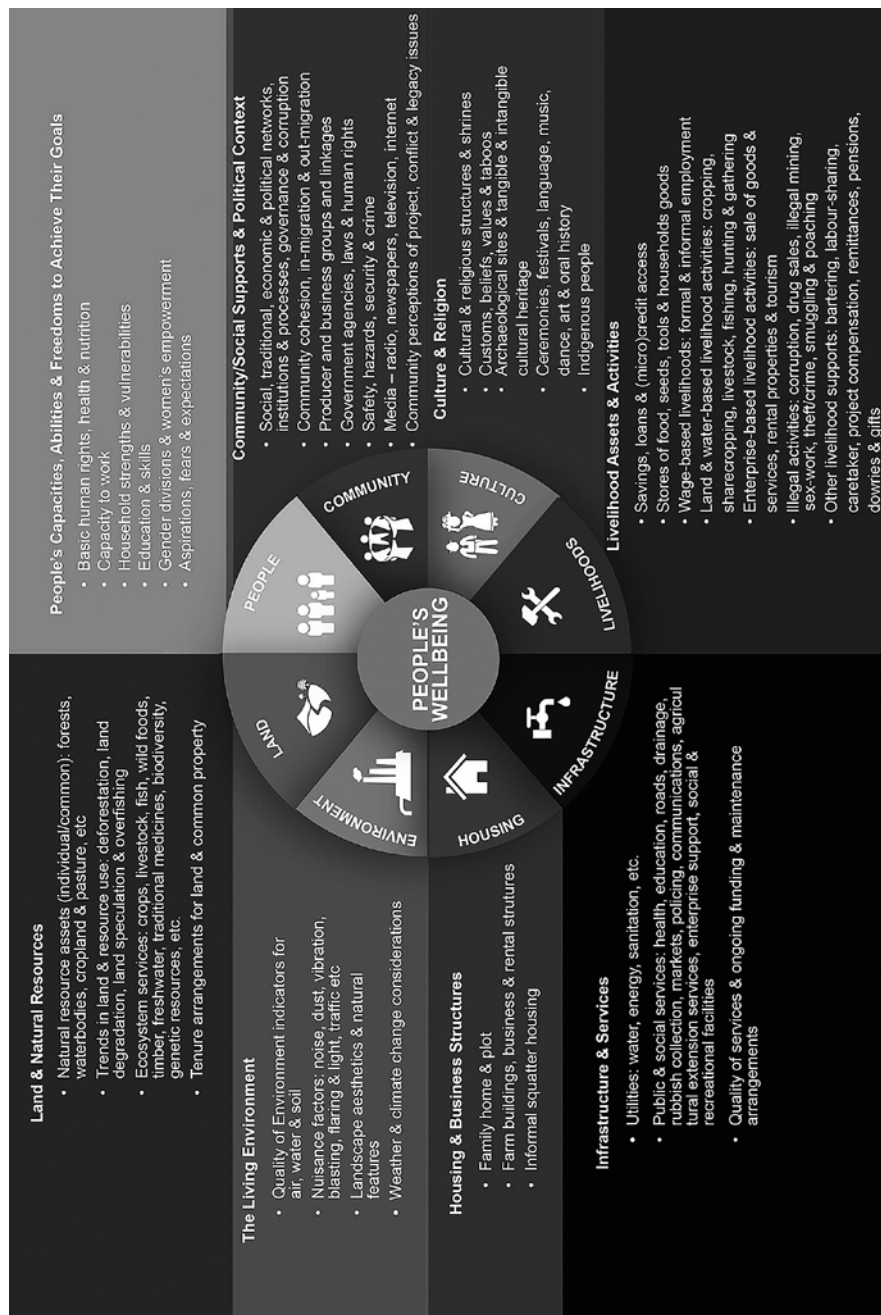
Although the key decisions in Figure 7.3 relate to local livelihoods, they are regularly negotiated and determined by companies and provincial governments using existing regulations with little involvement of those most impacted. The key decision points for impacted communities – such as the terms of land surrender from local landholders to the plantation landbank, the compensation payments relating to these land surrenders, the land-sharing ratios and partner-

ship arrangements between communities and the plantation company, agreements on pricing, income and payments for smallholder farmer oil palm fruit, and how the plantation company will work with smallholders on broader community and social issues – are rarely discussed (Paoli et al., 2012). The failure to encourage such discussion inevitably increases the risk of future social conflict.

Existing regulations arguably are intended to ensure communities derive benefits from oil palm development. However, these laws fail to recognise that agri-developments place communities in subordinate positions of power; provide only limited incentives for companies to invest in higher yields from smallholders who supply oil palm fruit to their mills; and place significant discretionary power in the hands of local authorities to monitor implementation of company–community agreements. There is no equipping of smallholders or the community with the tools, support, and regulatory authority needed to promote effective local oversight (Paoli et al., 2012). Ideally, an SIA would enable discussion and negotiation on guidelines for community–company engagement. This would assist in gaining an understanding of the local conditions that exist and in the development of local agreements and relationships that could ensure that the costs and benefits of the plantation development were sufficiently planned for.

A SOCIAL FRAMEWORK APPROACH TO IMPROVE PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT

The Social Framework for Projects (Smyth & Vanclay, 2017) is a useful approach to enable better understanding, assessing, planning, and managing of the social issues associated with big projects (see Figure 7.4). It draws on previous experience and learnings from the field of SIA (e.g., Vanclay, 2002; Esteves & Vanclay, 2009; Esteves et al., 2012; Vanclay et al., 2015). However, it improves the approach from the SIA perspective in that it places people’s wellbeing at the core of the framework. Individuals are used as the primary unit of analysis in recognition of the fact that there is considerable inequality within households and communities, and that some people are always more vulnerable to project impacts than others (Smyth & Vanclay, 2017). The Social Framework approach can provide a good general overview of the likely social impacts. However, it can also enable more detailed assessment involving each of the various social specialists in a project (e.g., social, health, ecosystem services, human rights, resettlement) who can use the framework to present their understandings of the positive and negative impacts of the project and their proposed mitigation measures. The value of the approach can be seen clearly in Table 7.1, which lays out the eight main social components with the realities of how large-scale oil palm developments affect local rural communities.



Source: Smyth & Vanclay (2017), reproduced with permission.

Figure 7.4 The Social Framework for Projects

Table 7.1 *Application of the Social Framework to large-scale oil palm development*

Dimensions of people's wellbeing	Indicative impacts and issues	Likely impacts due to large-scale oil palm development
Land and natural resources	Impact on natural resource assets and local land use	Limited land available for traditional vegetable and alternative livelihood harvests (rice, sago, rubber, durian, others)
	Ecosystem services including crops, livestock, and traditional medicines	Community shifts to market economy and imported products for food staples as opposed to local food
	Tenure arrangements	Ecosystem use and income reduced due to land-use change
	Competing land-use demands and elite capture	Local community members relinquish land and lose informal rights to land as part of engaging with a plantation Some local community members 'buy out' other locals, resulting in significant income and land inequalities, and intra-village conflict and angst Local food crops destroyed by plantation pests Tenure arrangements irrevocably changed from Indigenous interpretation to compensation and loss of land Local community members misunderstand compensation payments for conversion to oil palm, creating exclusion, poverty, anger, and conflict Land-use change creates new roles for local police as security apparatus for plantation companies
People's capacities and abilities to reach their goals	Basic human rights	Local community members who don't join a plantation and don't have a plantation job won't benefit from land-use change
	Capacity to work	Freedom of movement restricted due to plantation trespass rules
	Household vulnerabilities	Community culture and leisure activities of hunting largely restricted
	Education and skills	Local family gardens destroyed by plantation pests
	Gender divisions	Villagers at risk of becoming passive observers if they receive a monthly plantation shareholder payment and are not involved in farming at all
Living environment	Aspirations, fear, and anxieties	Skills gap between plantation workers and those without work
	Leisure and recreation	Changes in land use mean less protein diets due to reduction in wild hunting (reduction in habitat)
	Quality of local environment – water, soil, air	Downstream water sources affected by fertiliser runoff (poor quality drinking water, sickness, poisoning, not able to drink, skin irritability, lesions)
	Nuisance indicators – noise, light, project-related disturbance	Mishandling of pesticides, herbicides, fungicides
	Landscape aesthetics and place attachment	Soil quality reduced due to water runoff, deforestation, and high volumes of fertiliser
	Weather and climate change	Influx of outsiders into local community Influx of new pests and crop diseases Local inflation as plantation workers have increased disposable income Micro climate changes due to deforestation and reforestation Longer droughts lead to community vulnerability Biodiversity changes – pest vectors increased; habitat loss
	Community, social support, and political context	Community social interaction based less on community and culture and wholly on plantation economics and monthly harvest income Relationships with local police, leaders and politicians change as a pro-plantation narrative dominates Community cohesion reduced as cultural interactions and cultural spaces change Stress and anxiety over the future for children as minimal land left Palm oil fruit stealing within the community, reducing community cohesion, increasing conflict

Dimensions of people's wellbeing	Indicative impacts and issues	Likely impacts due to large-scale oil palm development	
Housing and business structures	Family home and plot	Garden plots may be significantly reduced, leading to vegetables and meat no longer being grown but purchased	
	Homeless affects	Transition to a market economy for food and deleterious dietary change as a result of this Less family savings Less disposable and emergency income Flooding becomes a risk due to deforestation and plantation development	
Culture and religion	Religious structures and buildings	Communities not able to collaboratively hunt, reduction in social fabric	
	Culture beliefs, values, intangible cultural heritage	Local heritage and local cultural beliefs destroyed Local land-related cultural festivals and gatherings changed	
	Ceremonies, festivals, gatherings, etc.	Shifting cultivation traditions changed forever Rattan harvesting significantly changed	
	Indigenous people	Village collaboration activities less popular than before as villagers choose to work shifts rather than attend village activities	
Infrastructure and services	Utilities, water, energy, sanitation	Access to and use of local water may be reduced or rendered impossible	
	Health, education, roads, rubbish, pollution, local markets, pricing for products, policing, local services	Access to riparian feedstock (fish, shrimps, prawns etc.) reduced or stopped altogether Chemical pollution increases due to plantation runoff Injuries and illnesses working on plantation increased due to poor PPE and training Travel times to services, forests, market gardens, local schools, increased due to large plantations Local roads can become impassable due to overloaded oil palm trucks Increase in traffic accidents from oil palm trucks and no nearby health clinics Plantation health clinics often not open to local community (only for workers) Costs for local services increases as plantation staff increase disposable income Local wood products from the forest logged out, so community must purchase products for housing and infrastructure	
	Livelihood assets and activities	Savings and loans	Employment structure changes, with distinct winners and losers
		Storage of foods and seeds	Certain illegal activities increased – stealing, company theft, land theft, corruption, governance irregularities due to poor regulatory oversight
		Formal and informal employment	Reduction in alternative income sources from agriculture, especially rice and rubber plantings
		Land and water-based livelihood activities	Smallholder farmers tricked into buying fake seedlings, fake fertiliser, fake herbicide and pesticide
		Illegal activities – drugs, prostitution, gambling, illegal mining, animal trafficking, theft and crime	
Other livelihood supports labour sharing, project compensation, corruption			

Source: Author, drawing on the social framework of Smyth & Vanclay (2017).

CONCLUSION

The Indonesian oil palm industry was used to demonstrate the need to improve how social impacts are considered, monitored, and measured in large-scale agri-development projects. The impacts of social change brought about by large-scale projects can be forecast, planned for, and mitigated. This can be done in any large-scale project by considering impacts at the earliest stages, and by making genuine efforts to mitigate negative impacts and focus on increasing equity in the benefits from such project development. Rural communities are significantly affected by large-scale palm oil development. Unfortunately, the conventional EIA that is done fails to adequately address these social issues. Much better assessment of social impacts is needed.

The Social Framework approach (Smyth & Vanclay, 2017) can methodically uncover the social impacts experienced by the local community. It is a practical tool to understand and illuminate the local context, ensuring that the impacts relating to the main components of social wellbeing are considered. A social framework approach embedded early, and regularly revisited throughout the project's lifecycle, will support the local communities and small-holder farmers impacted by agri-development. It can also be used to improve the planning for intended development outcomes. The Social Framework approach can go further than an initial assessment, by breaking down initial thoughts and examining the component parts following fieldwork and observation. This creates a far deeper awareness of how issues, such as power, participation, and equity, influence and impact the project, and how these inevitable impacts can be considered and mitigated.

A detailed, well-thought-out SIA is able to add value to local outcomes by considering impacts before and during the rollout of the project. An important part of this is realising that, whenever opportunities are created for local economic development, political elites tend to misappropriate the benefits (Li, 1996; Blair, 2000; Ribot et al., 2006; Cahill, 2008; Hall et al., 2011). Practitioners and project managers must not shy away from focusing on how an SIA can mitigate inequitable outcomes, but instead to consider this in an open and transparent way. Doing so will improve the community acceptance of the project, and reduce project variance and reduced community support that often occurs as a result of a substandard EIA/SIA approach. The initial and ongoing use of the Social Framework improves the way communities and project companies interact in a community setting, openly addressing the potential risks of projects for communities and companies, and consequently planning for this. This in turn creates better and more equitable local outcomes, resulting in a stronger overall project.

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PART III

SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT FOR DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

8. Social impact assessment from the perspective of project proponents

Ilse Aucamp

INTRODUCTION

Many project proponents (whether public sector, private sector, or public–private partnerships) are unaware that developments take place, not only within the rule set prescribed by local laws, but also in a wider context of higher-level initiatives that may impose constraints on what they intend to achieve. Globally, there is an increase in community awareness about human rights, sustainability, and inclusiveness that cannot be precisely articulated in the development rule set and that needs to be considered on a case-by-case basis (Vanclay & Hanna, 2019). The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations, 2015), which encompasses 17 Sustainable Development Goals, highlighted the critical links between development, global to local environmental health, human wellbeing, and the full enjoyment of a wide range of human rights, including the rights to life, health, food, water, and sanitation (Aucamp et al., 2020). With the adoption of the United Nations (2011) *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights*, the corporate responsibility to respect human rights was confirmed. This requires that companies (and other organisations, including governments) exercise due diligence to identify and address any adverse human rights impacts with which they are involved (Götzmann et al., 2016; Esteves et al., 2017). Several social impacts can be understood in human rights terms (Esteves et al., 2017; van der Ploeg & Vanclay, 2017), and the links between social impacts, human rights, and the accountability of businesses in the execution of projects are seldom appreciated by project proponents (van der Ploeg & Vanclay, 2018). In contrast, many communities are aware of their rights, and use a wide range of forms of social mobilisation to assert their rights (Hanna et al., 2016). The domain of Social Impact Assessment (SIA) mediates the impacts of developments on communities. Given the impact that communities can have on project development, it is risky for proponents not to invest in SIA, as non-consideration of the social issues can lead to reputational risk, community unrest, and time and cost delays (Franks et al., 2014; Vanclay & Hanna, 2019).

Project proponents commission SIAs for various reasons. SIA is used for decision-making and impact identification in regulatory or licensing processes before projects commence. It is also used throughout the project lifecycle to assist with risk identification and social management processes. In some instances, conducting an SIA is a prerequisite of funders, and some companies conduct SIA to get internal approvals at stage gates. Although there is a role for SIA in each project phase, when to start engaging with social issues depends on each project proponent. Some project proponents choose to engage early, while some engage late in the process. However, SIA conducted at the end of a project does not achieve its full potential, and ideally SIA should be included from the project inception phase to influence project design and siting decisions. In fact, SIA should inform each decision point (stage gate) that enables the project to progress from one phase to the next.

An SIA is typically commissioned by a proponent who is developing a specific project, for example an airport, bridge, bypass, dam, highway, mine, pipeline, port, transmission corridor, windfarm, commercial agriculture, agroforestry development, or the creation of a nature conservation area. Resources to guide practitioners about best practice in SIA are abundant (Esteves et al., 2012, 2017; Vanclay et al., 2015; Kwam, 2018; Taylor & Mackay, 2022), but little guidance is available specifically for project proponents (ICMM, 2022). It is unrealistic to expect project proponents to read the myriad resources that exist about the intrinsic workings of an SIA (most of which are written for practitioners) and anticipate that they will be able to synthesise their role in the SIA process. Project proponents tend to commission SIAs infrequently (perhaps even only once in their life), and an infrequent user cannot be expected to understand the intricacies, processes, benefits, and cost implications of SIA. The aim of this chapter, therefore, is to provide guidance to project proponents about their involvement in the SIA process. Apart from the author's extensive experience as an SIA practitioner assisting communities and proponents, this chapter has been informed by a small number of in-depth interviews with project proponents who commission SIA at different levels. These interviews were done consistent with ethical social research principles (Vanclay et al., 2013). The chapter intends to help project proponents better understand and manage the SIA process.

WHY SHOULD A PROJECT PROPONENT COMMISSION A SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT?

There are many reasons why proponents should commission an SIA, the main ones being as follows.

Permitting and compliance: This is the dominant driver for most project proponents to commission an SIA. In permitting, most SIAs are conducted as a part of an environmental impact assessment (EIA) process that is required by the regulatory agency in the country where the project is being implemented.

Access to finance: to access project finance, companies usually have to conduct an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA). This is a requirement of most banks and development agencies including the World Bank, International Finance Corporation, African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Investment Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank. As most private banks are signatories to the Equator Principles, the sustainability standard for the finance industry, they also generally require ESIA to be undertaken so that the environmental, social, and governance risks are considered (Vanclay & Hanna, 2019).

Improve the project's social licence to operate: the concept of social licence means more than just being an amicable mode of interaction between communities and project proponents in that it mediates opportunities and threats to a project (Vanclay & Hanna, 2019). By using SIA, project proponents are able to pre-empt the social impacts that they should try to avoid and reduce (as these would be risks to their operation). Similarly, it is important for proponents to identify the potential benefits from the projects to communities and attempt to enhance these benefits. Some project proponents interviewed for this chapter indicated that they had commissioned standalone SIAs for their own purposes, and that these studies were usually more detailed in terms of scoping and addressing specific concerns than those normally conducted for regulatory EIA.

Guide social investment: an SIA provides guidance about the social investments that might be appropriate for particular communities. Social investment is not an altruistic process but a way of ensuring that the synergistic needs of the communities and business are met (Esteves & Vanclay, 2009). To gain buy-in from local government, social investments should be in line with local economic development plans. In managing social investments, proponents can use SIA as a management tool to identify the potential contributions the company can make to their host communities. Some project proponents base their corporate social investment projects on information presented in the SIA. They view SIA as a means to get community feedback and buy-in for this purpose.

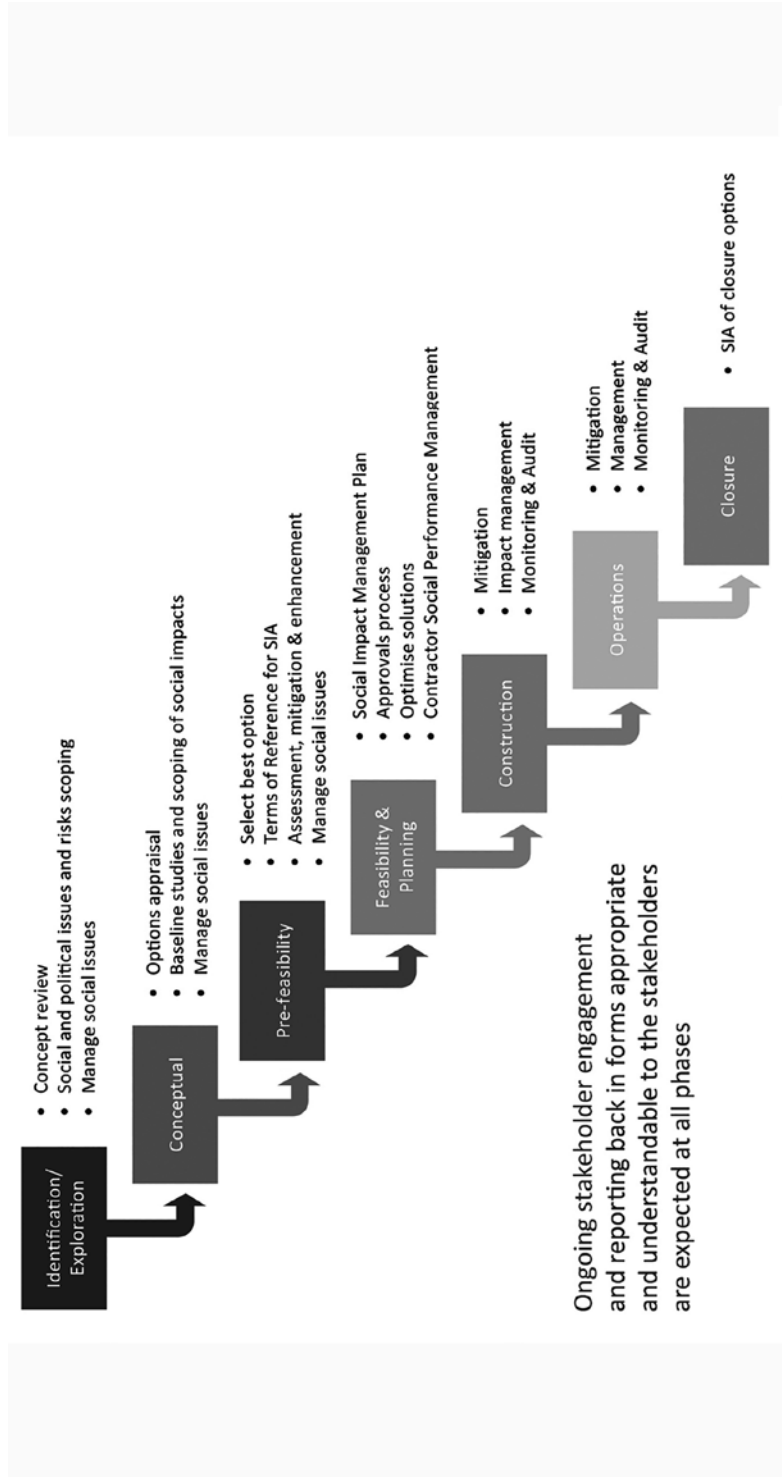
Ensure respect for human rights: with the adoption of the United Nations *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* in 2011, the corporate responsibility to respect human rights was confirmed. This responsibility requires that companies exercise due diligence to identify and address any adverse human rights impacts with which they are involved (Esteves et al., 2017; see Chapter 15). SIA follows a human-rights based approach and, by using SIA, the proponent can confirm that the rights of communities are protected by putting appropriate mitigation measures in place to ensure no harm is done to communities.

WHERE DOES SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT FIT INTO THE PROJECT LIFECYCLE?

Given that SIA should be seen as a process rather than as a report (Vanclay et al., 2015), a specific role for SIA can be identified in each project phase. Figure 8.1 illustrates a typical project lifecycle and identifies the role of SIA at each phase. A project lifecycle is not always a linear process and some of the phases may overlap to some extent. The project is reviewed after each decision point to determine whether the project should continue and how social considerations are being addressed.

During the identification/exploration phase, the project proponent identifies the potential project. The project proponent needs to understand the social context where the project will take place, and must highlight any social and political issues and risks. In the conceptual phase of the project, there is more information available, and the project proponent has a clearer idea of the direction of the project. The proponent identifies what options are available to execute the project. The potential social impacts of each option should be considered. At this stage, most social studies are still at a high level. During the pre-feasibility phase, the project proponent decides on the scope of the project and estimates the cost and resources needed. In this phase, the project proponent determines what will be required to proceed with the project. This includes the regulatory or licensing requirements, which may include the need for an SIA, either as a standalone study or as part of an ESIA. The terms of reference for the (E)SIA are developed. The potential social risks and threats to the project are identified and flagged.

There is often an overlap between the pre-feasibility and feasibility and planning phases. The feasibility and planning phase is where the project proponent defines how, where, and by whom the work will be done. During this phase, the project proponent compiles an SIA tender document, defines the terms of reference, and starts a tendering process to recruit an SIA consultant. This can be done in various ways, including directly approaching preferred SIA practitioners and/or advertising in newspapers, websites and industry networks, and, if a public sector project, a formal call through the official government channels.



Source: Vanclay et al. (2015).

Figure 8.1 Application of SIA in all the project phases

Unless the project proponent has an in-house social performance team that was involved in the previous phases, the first time an SIA practitioner is appointed will likely be during the pre-feasibility phase or the feasibility and planning phase. This is also where the SIA study will be conducted, and usually where the first formal interaction between project proponents and communities takes place. Project proponents can attend community engagement events to introduce themselves to communities, especially in the case of long-term projects. However, it must be considered that there is an independence requirement for most SIAs, and due to power imbalances, it is generally not conducive to the process to have project proponents at all the meetings conducted as part of the SIA.

If the SIA was being done to meet permitting or licensing requirements, it will usually include the development of social impact mitigation and management plans (Franks & Vanclay, 2013). During this phase, the project proponent will receive the SIA report, and will be given an opportunity to review and comment on it. The project proponent can request clarification or change to the report, but it is up to the SIA practitioner to ensure that the report is not biased. Therefore, the SIA practitioner must be free to choose whether or not to implement any suggested changes. This independence of the SIA practitioner must be respected by the proponent. SIA studies are usually in the public domain, and the affected communities must also have an opportunity to comment on the report. The report should include social impact mitigation measures and be supported by a social impact management plan (SIMP). The project proponent should be involved in the development of mitigation measures and the SIMP to ensure that there is commitment by the project to implement the recommendations.

Many social impacts are associated with the construction phase of a project, especially because of the substantial involvement of multiple stakeholders during this phase, including many contractors. This is when the project proponent must implement the social impact mitigation actions and any social benefit enhancement measures that were identified in the SIA report. In practice, there is often an extended period between when the SIA was conducted and when construction starts. Many project contractors do not have social or community liaison staff, and the people who implement the social impact mitigation measures are often not the people who wrote the SIMP. Therefore, there are often discrepancies between what is written in the SIA and SIMP documents and what happens at the construction site. Community conflict often starts in this phase, as it is associated with the significant interruptions to the everyday lives of people in the local community. There is a significant distinction between social impact mitigation and social impact management. Social impact mitigation is usually a once-off intervention of design to reduce impacts, whilst social impact management is an ongoing process of managing social impacts throughout the life of the project. Monitoring and auditing against the SIMP start during project construction and should continue as long as the project is operational.

During the operation phase, the project proponent implements the project. Social impact monitoring must continue during the operation phase. Depending on the type of project, there may be less interruption at the community level, or people may become accustomed to the project. This is the phase where good neighbourly relations are very important and where a loss of social licence to operate may occur and be difficult to restore.

The last phase of a project is the closure phase. For a project proponent, this phase signals the end of the project, meaning that it is no longer financially viable or that it has reached the end of its lifespan. From an SIA perspective, a study that investigates the social impacts of closure should be conducted to mediate the impacts of potential job losses and other social

disruptions that result from project closure, and identify opportunities for repurposing the site in line with community aspirations. Since there is usually a significant time difference between project initiation and closure, the original SIA report will no longer be valid, and a new SIA should be done.

Table 8.1 indicates the steps and tasks regarding the social aspects of a project that a project proponent should follow at each phase of the project lifecycle. The last row indicates the tangible deliverables that a project proponent can expect in each phase.

WHAT ABOUT COST AND TIME ASSOCIATED WITH DOING SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT?

Engaging with communities is time consuming and expensive for a number of reasons. Firstly, the SIA consultant must travel to engage with communities especially if local people don't have access to technology or can't participate in engagement processes in other ways. It is also important to move at the pace of the community. Communities need time to process information and discuss things among themselves. Meaningful engagement takes time and effort, but without it, the voice of the community will not be heard. The cost and time of doing community engagement and SIA are usually a proponent's biggest concerns, even though they are essential for the success of a project. In this section, I consider some of the issues mentioned by the proponents I interviewed around their cost and time concerns.

There can be negative perceptions about the cost of SIA, by the community as well as by the project proponent. Some project proponents think that the cost of SIA is excessive, and that the information provided has limited utility. However, this is often due to a proponent's limited understanding about the value SIA can contribute. Proponents with a better understanding of social and environmental issues will value the contribution made by SIA, and they may have previously experienced the benefits of SIA. Regarding communities, when they know the cost of assessments, they sometimes have the perception that the money could be better used for community development purposes, or at least that the cost of the SIA is disproportionate to what it provides to them as local communities. This perception also relates to previous bad experiences where projects delivered very little benefit to communities. It also derives from their lack of trust in the project (and often in the government) and from the community thinking that the SIA will not change anything.

Conducting an appropriate SIA takes time. An SIA should tell the story of the project-affected communities. Gathering data and listening to community members' stories can be time and cost intensive. In contrast, permitting tends to be driven by tight time schedules. There needs to be a shift from the minimalist approach of just meeting regulatory requirements towards allocating enough time and resources to undertake an effective study that contributes value to the proponents and safeguards the community. It takes time to contact and access all relevant stakeholders, to undertake sufficient community engagement, and to provide feedback to them. If the time provided for an SIA is too short, it will not do justice to all the parties SIA serves (the project proponent and the affected communities), which results in no value-add for the project and potentially problems down the track. Ironically, the lack of perceived value of SIA is typically the result of under-investment rather than over-investment in SIA. Proponents that invest adequate time and resources in SIA reap the benefit through an improved social

Table 8.1 Social aspects to consider in the project lifecycle from the project proponent's perspective

Identification/ exploration	Conceptual	Pre-feasibility	Feasibility & Planning	Construction	Operations	Closure
High-level social and political risk analysis – what is happening in the area where my project will be constructed?	Select different project options to consider	Determine regulatory or licensing requirements	Develop Terms of Reference (as specific as possible) and call for tenders	Appoint someone to implement the social impact mitigation and benefits enhancement plans	Continue with community liaison forum	Start planning at project conception what will happen after closure
Ensure early project field work staff are trained to not create expectations if they engage with community members. No commitments should be made to project-affected communities.	Identify potential social impacts of each option	Determine need and motivation for SIA	Identify and appoint SIA practitioner and conduct inception meeting to clarify scope of work	Set up a grievance mechanism	Continue with and review grievance mechanism	Engage with communities in time (at least 2–5 years before) to allow them to prepare for closure
		If there is land acquisition, establish a community liaison process and a grievance mechanism	Community engagement Establish a Commitments Register	Set up community liaison forum	Implement SIMP – involve community in monitoring	Conduct closure SIA

Identification/ exploration	Conceptual	Pre-feasibility	Feasibility & Planning	Construction	Operations	Closure
			Conduct workshop to discuss SIA findings, mitigation and integration with other specialist studies	Community engagement	Community engagement	Implement social closure plans
			Decide on the way forward in terms of social performance team			Community engagement
			Give feedback to project-affected communities			
Social risk analysis report	Matrix indicating suitability of each option and criteria used to avoid social impacts	Memo on need and desirability and regulatory or licensing requirements	Social baseline report SIA report with mitigation measures and SIMP	Updated SIMP with contractor responsibilities Grievance register Minutes of community liaison forum Monitoring reports	Grievance register Minutes of community liaison forum Monitoring reports	SIA report with mitigation measures and SIMP
Manage expectations	Manage expectations	Manage expectations	Manage expectations	Manage expectations	Manage expectations	Manage expectations

licence to operate. Proponents that want a fast and low-cost study often struggle to win the trust of the community, as it feels like a tick-box approach.

Some project proponents use in-house social performance teams to conduct their SIAs. However, the regulatory requirement for independence may demand that they use external practitioners. The advantage of in-house social performance teams is that they can build better relationships with communities and be involved over the long term. However, some project proponents who were interviewed had different views about in-house specialists. One stated that:

The assessment of impacts, as well as the identification of these impacts related to the SIAs, are more accurate when done from an independent point of view. I've noticed that with a lot of specialist studies where the specialist is 'in-house', or where the environmental assessment practitioner identifies and rates the impact (rather than the social specialist), it could be biased without this necessarily being done on purpose. The point of a specialist study is to get an accurate and unbiased study and outcome, whether it is in support of the project or not.

One of the project proponents interviewed expressed the opinion that the biggest issue in an SIA is inadequate data, as collecting contextual data is expensive. The analysis and mitigation components of a study are not as time intensive as data collection. The value obtained from good SIA analysis is justified, but average or poor SIAs may be a pointless exercise. Project proponents do not always believe they get good value for money from SIAs. One concern was that the way an impact is narrated is important and an impact description must not be too generic. When identifying an impact, the practitioner should not simply give it a label. It is important to describe the 'who, where, how, and why' of every impact. In order to do this effectively, the SIA practitioner must ensure that they understand the objectives the project proponent wants to meet. It is also important for the SIA practitioner to understand the proponent's expectations, otherwise a lot of time and energy can be wasted trying to clarify what the required outcomes should be. This can be avoided to a large degree if the brief is properly defined.

Overall, project proponents were of the opinion that SIA was important, and in reality, was not more costly than other technical studies. One of the participants felt that:

Considering the time that goes into writing reports and doing the study, I do not think that SIA studies are as costly as other specialist studies such as Biodiversity and Engineering reports in particular. Research and accurate reflections of the particular case are very important, since the public participation part of an EIA is usually a big driver that calls for an SIA and it makes a massive contribution to handling comments from affected people and answering most of their comments as accurately as possible.

THE VALUE SIA CAN ADD TO A PROJECT FROM A PROJECT PROPONENT'S PERSPECTIVE

The value of SIA is determined by the quality of the SIA process and report. The way an SIA is undertaken, the extent to which the values of the practitioner and proponent are aligned and community value systems considered, and the methods used to identify the issues all influence the quality of the SIA. Most importantly, SIA gives a good overview of what is happening in communities, the needs and risks they have, and how a project proponent can influence local

people. By using the data gathered in an SIA, the project proponent can start working on the community issues they may otherwise exacerbate, or that may influence the project. SIA gives project proponents insight into why, for example, protests take place. A good SIA depicts the true situation in project-affected communities, shows what is feasible, and creates opportunities for identifying shared value. Having conducted an SIA makes it easier to work with the local government, and it is valuable to see what resources and facilities are available, or not available, in the community. Some stakeholders can become partners, and partnerships are important, especially in the mitigation and management of social impacts.

The SIA is a means to assemble a team of technical people to discuss impacts on people and create opportunities for collaboration. Many project proponents felt that projects designed without an SIA were done in a ‘bubble’, without any reality check, and were difficult to execute. One project proponent proclaimed: ‘It is clear when a project did not use SIA in the design phase, it is not implementable.’ Project managers who have previously dealt with social issues usually are more aware of the value SIA adds to a project. However, some project proponents felt that not all the information available in SIAs was used as it should or could be, and SIA reports were often ignored. They thought that if the information generated by the SIA was not considered, then opportunities for collaboration and value-add were missed, and social risks overlooked. This could result in delays to the project.

Project proponents felt that an important aspect of SIA is that it assists with the stakeholder engagement process. Most concerns about projects relate to the social impacts on the people in the surrounding areas. Addressing public concerns by using a specialist study enhances the credibility of the project proponent and indicates that their concerns are being taken seriously. An SIA also helps to determine impacts that could improve the social environment, and it gives a broad perspective on the project and the neighbouring communities will be affected.

ADVICE FROM PROJECT PROPONENTS ABOUT GETTING BETTER SOCIAL OUTCOMES

There are many improvements that proponents seek in relation to project implementation and the role of SIA. Based on the comments of the proponents I interviewed, together with what has been said to me in the context of my professional career, the following points can be made.

Increase buy-in from local government and strengthen linkages with all local partners. In the past, project proponents tended to invest in communities only for reputational motives, but the focus has now changed and project proponents are increasingly recognising the strategic advantage of investing in communities. To achieve good outcomes, it is necessary for proponents to align with local government and other development actors to ensure that projects, mitigation measures, and social investment activities are supported by all official parties. Project proponents emphasised the importance of getting local government buy-in, because, without support from the local government, implementing the project and its social investments activities is often futile. It was noted that there may be different perspectives between local government leaders and community leaders, and this must always be considered since it can lead to conflicting agendas. To work towards a situation where community leaders will support the project, an SIA practitioner can assist by identifying the community leaders and instigating the initial discussions between these leaders and the project proponent. If independent SIA practitioners engage with the government and other actors on behalf of the project

proponent and create linkages for future cooperation and partnerships, this is advantageous for the project proponent. Practitioners can also establish a process for ongoing engagement. SIA practitioners can assist the proponent by connecting them with the right people and groups in the community to work with. Practitioners should share their knowledge with proponents, for instance by providing examples from similar industries and what was implemented, what was successful, and what did not work. Proponents expect SIA practitioners to explain how opportunities are linked to what is already in the area.

Improve the readability of reports. Some project proponents felt that they were not qualified or capable of interpreting SIAs. They also felt that where the SIA contained very general statements requiring the project proponent to make interpretations, some value may be lost. There might be certain topics on which the project proponent focuses, and therefore they only look at that part of the SIA. SIAs are usually voluminous, and therefore the non-technical summary is very important, as it is often the only part of the report project management might read. In general, the readability of SIA reports should be improved, and they often could be more succinct. Spatial data and visualisations can assist with seeing the bigger picture and should be used much more in SIA reports. Using spatial data and maps adds significant value to SIA and allows for easier integration with other aspects of projects.

Improve the usefulness of baseline data. All SIAs include baseline data and community profile information. Project proponents felt that practitioners should summarise the baseline data more effectively and extract the pertinent themes for the project proponent, and not present baseline studies that are just a dump of information. The baseline must contain data that links back to the impacts likely to be experienced. The data must be interpreted, analysed, and included only if it is relevant. Project proponents want to understand the link between baseline information and the social impacts. The baseline data should be used as impetus for impact alleviation and the identification of opportunities.

Better understanding of what happens after the SIA. Project proponents have a need to understand the link between the SIA and the next phases of the project. They understood that the SIA consultant's task stopped at the end of the contract. However, they thought that the SIA consultants ought also to consider what the SIA can do beyond just submitting a report. It was therefore essential that there be a project staff member to be responsible for implementing the recommendations and that they must know what to do. To be effective and useful to the project, the SIA and SIMP must be practical and implementable, bearing in mind that project proponents and construction teams are not social experts. There should be an input into each phase of the project. It should be more than just ticking boxes on a checklist, and should offer actual guidance on how to progress with the social aspects of the project. The project proponents interviewed often struggled with what to take forward from an SIA, especially in a practical and implementable manner. As one project proponent stated: 'How are we going to do this once the report is on the shelf?' If the project proponent has a social performance team, this team will be responsible for managing implementation of the mitigation measures and SIMP. At this stage, the SIA practitioner has fulfilled their contractual requirements and, depending on the regulatory context, may not be allowed to continue working on the project. However, effective handover from the SIA practitioner to the social performance team would be to the benefit of all parties, including affected communities. The SIA practitioner can introduce the social performance team to the community and share information with them. If it is a small project and there is no social performance team, then the project proponent should appoint an appropriate person to be responsible for implementing the SIMP.

Develop better cross-disciplinary communication. Projects are implemented by teams with different expertise and skill sets. Social impacts must be considered in project implementation; therefore it is important to ensure that the implementation team understand the social environment. The problem is that, generally, the disciplines involved do not include social scientists and are biased towards technical aspects. Given the multiple dimensions of social impacts (Smyth & Vanclay, 2017), the SIA process is an ideal tool to bring together the different skillsets. Project proponents would like to see better interaction between the project and SIA practitioner in terms of sharing data and access to information. If this does not happen, the project proponent may lose rich information. However, the interactions between different teams cannot always be facilitated by the SIA practitioner, and it is incumbent on project proponents to assist and empower the parties to interact effectively.

Improve integration between the different types of impacts. The integration of other impacts with social impacts must also be considered in SIA. For example, community climate resilience should be more prominent in SIAs. SIA could be useful as a long-term planning instrument, especially in relation to impacts that might currently be neglected but that could be devastating in the future. The integration of community health impacts into SIA is an obvious case in point. The link between project emissions and their health consequences, and the ability to mitigate these impacts, must be considered.

DEALING WITH CONCERNS

Table 8.2 outlines some common concerns raised by project proponents when embarking upon an SIA and proactive actions to deal with them.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has demonstrated that there are clear benefits to a project proponent from doing SIA. Most project proponents who have used SIA as a planning tool beyond regulatory permitting compliance are convinced that it adds considerable value to their business. SIA can be conducted in all project phases, but the earlier SIA is conducted in the project lifecycle, the better. SIA may take some time and funding to do properly, but it is well worth the investment. SIA provides an overview of project-affected communities, outlines opportunities for collaboration between technical teams, and highlights the concerns of communities. Project proponents can use the SIA process to establish links between the project and the local municipality. However, there is a need for better translation between the SIA practitioner and the internal and other parties that will be responsible for implementing the social impact management actions. To enhance communication in the project, the task of ‘managing the social issues’ must be added to the list of project management tasks. Social impact assessment is an essential tool for creating a more sustainable future.

Table 8.2 *Proponent concerns and how to avoid pitfalls*

Possible concerns	Proactive actions to avoid these concerns
Some proponents have very specific expectations about the end product of the SIA process; for example it must address a specific concern that they have and include certain aspects.	Ensure that the expected end product in terms of aspects that should be included in the SIA is detailed in the terms of reference. Agree on milestones once the SIA practitioner has been appointed. Have regular check-in meetings to monitor progress and identify potential risks, delays, and other issues. The SIA consultant should prepare the proponent for the possibility that the findings of the SIA may not be something that they are comfortable with; however an ethical SIA practitioner will never alter the findings of a report.
The SIA must be completed in a certain timeframe due to permitting or compliance issues. The SIA must fit into a tight project schedule with little room for flexibility. Concern about the cost of the study.	If possible, commission the SIA to commence before the permitting process starts, to allow enough time for the SIA to be done properly. Ensure that the appointed SIA practitioner has the capacity to start working on the project immediately after selection. Ensure that there will be sufficient time for community engagement. Agree on costs before work commences. Have a contract in place that specifies what is included and excluded in the SIA. Ensure enough funds are allocated to community engagement.
Desire to ensure the process is conducted appropriately.	Organise a weekly check-in session for feedback. Discuss all issues during this session. Ensure that the practitioner that you appointed have appropriate qualifications and experience and trust them with the process.
Concern that the SIA will discover unpleasant surprises.	
Final project design has not yet been decided and information may change.	The SIA practitioner can still make recommendations about the social aspects of the project. The information available will depend on where in the project cycle the SIA is conducted. It is important to go to the public with as much information as possible to allow them to make informed decisions. Communicating with communities without all the appropriate information increases the social risk and can lead to project delays and loss of social licence to operate.
Lack of familiarity with SIA and uncertainty about what the process entails and what is expected from the project proponent.	Ask the SIA practitioner to provide guidance and explain the process. The SIA practitioner can suggest the best approach to use. Apart from reading this chapter, maybe look at some of the key guidance documents, e.g. Vanclay et al., 2015; Kvam, 2018, Taylor & Mackay, 2022).
Making changes to the project after delivery of the SIA report.	Discuss the changes with the SIA practitioner. In some instances, it may mean that there will need to be another round of engagement, or that another community must be included in the study. Be aware that these changes might create additional costs and move out the project timeline.
Desire to only meet the minimum regulatory requirements or funder's standards and tick the box to ensure compliance.	Even if a project proponent only wants to tick the box, an SIA practitioner can still provide them with a good SIA. Consider the value and advantages of a thorough SIA process and how it will influence social licence to operate.

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9. Social impact assessment as used by international financial institutions

Reidar Kvam

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses Social Impact Assessment (SIA) as it is applied among international finance institutions (IFIs). This includes multilateral development banks (MDBs), such as the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB and IDB Invest), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and others. The chapter also references commercial banks and other financial institutions. Social development concerns have long been an area of focus for IFIs, both as a way to integrate and mainstream attention to social issues across sectors such as transport, energy, and public sector management, and as particular focus areas for development interventions in areas such as local community initiatives and social inclusion of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in the development process. Social scientists working within IFIs and collaborating with academics and practitioners outside these institutions have stressed the importance of social assessment as an approach and methodology since the 1990s. Social assessment was discussed in detail in the World Bank's 2003 *Social Analysis Sourcebook*:

Social assessment is the instrument the Borrower uses to analyze social issues and solicit stakeholder views for the design of Bank-supported projects ... As part of the social assessment process, the Borrower should identify groups that are vulnerable to conflict, violence or economic shocks and, in the light of socioeconomic trends indicated by the diversity analyses, examine the nature and root causes of their vulnerability. (World Bank, 2003, p. 57)

IFIs have different lending modalities and financial services. These may include project loans, grants, lending through other financial institutions (known as Financial Intermediary lending), lending to support policy reform, equity investments in firms, and other modalities and instruments. The emphasis in this discussion is on the more traditional investment project finance, where an IFI lends to a government or a private sector company to finance activities in sectors such as infrastructure, health, education, or natural resources. These projects typically involve a multi-year timeline from initial concept and preparation through implementation and closure.

Since the 1980s, it has been recognised that such investment projects may cause harm to people and/or to the environment, for example through degradation of natural habitats, displacement of local communities, and impacts on Indigenous peoples. IFIs therefore gradually adopted 'do no harm' policies and requirements to avoid, minimise, or mitigate adverse impacts. These policies are variously referred to as safeguards policies, performance standards, environmental and social standards, or similar. The discussion in this chapter focuses primarily on assessing and managing social risk within the frameworks of these policies and standards. SIA as a methodology can – and should – go beyond risk management to also

identify and promote social benefits and opportunities to improve on pre-project baseline conditions, particularly for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. In practice, the main focus among IFIs has been on defining SIA in the context of risk management. The mandatory nature of environmental and social safeguards policies and standards has contributed to a more systematic and consistent uptake of assessment methodologies than other types of development support and interventions where these policies are not applied.

The early safeguards policies were developed at different times and in an ad hoc manner, usually in response to particular topics recognised to have the potential to cause adverse impacts. However, there was limited consistency among the policies, both within and across IFIs. Explicit attention to social risks initially focused on impacts caused by involuntary resettlement and impacts on Indigenous peoples. Other social topics were addressed inconsistently or not at all; and most emphasis was placed on environmental impacts. To the extent that social issues were addressed, they were typically subsumed into environmental impact assessments (EIAs). However, experience has shown that subsuming social issues within a standard that primarily deals with environmental issues rarely works well in practice. Increasingly, this has been recognised, and current IFI standards reflect a more balanced approach to how environmental and social issues are being addressed. There is also increasing harmonisation and convergence across all IFIs.

A BALANCED APPROACH TO ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL RISK FACTORS

A balanced approach with equal emphasis on social and environmental issues was first developed by the IFC, with its adoption of the Environmental and Social Performance Standards in 2006, and revised in 2012. This was the first set of environmental and social policies developed as an integrated framework, rather than as a set of stand-alone policies developed at different times. The 2012 IFC Performance Standards consist of eight standards applicable to clients: PS1 Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts; PS2 Labor and Working Conditions; PS3 Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention; PS4 Community Health, Safety, and Security; PS5 Land Acquisition and Involuntary Resettlement; PS6 Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources; PS7 Indigenous Peoples; and PS8 Cultural Heritage.

The IFC Performance Standards rapidly became the global norm for environmental and social risk management in the private sector. They have been adopted by numerous companies, industry associations, and other groups. They also became the model for other financial institutions, including (as at mid-2023) the over 140 commercial banks, export credit agencies, bilateral development finance institutions and other institutions in 39 countries that are signatories of the Equator Principles Financial Institutions. They are also the default standard for many consulting firms and construction companies (Vanclay & Hanna, 2019). By 2023, most multilateral development banks had implemented new or revised environmental and social policy frameworks that are modelled on the IFC Performance Standards, albeit with some variations.

A good practice generic policy framework for the environmental and social standards of an IFI is illustrated in Figure 9.1. As Figure 9.1 shows, environmental and social risk assessment and management is regarded as a client responsibility. The client plans and implements

projects, while the IFI undertakes its own due diligence process and project oversight through supervision. The IFI also provides support and advice to clients. The environmental and social assessment process is a requirement as part of project design and management.

INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL ASSESSMENT

The frameworks modelled on the IFC Performance Standards all have an introductory or ‘umbrella standard’ that summarises key objectives, principles, and requirements for how IFI clients are expected to conduct environmental and social risk assessment and management. It is through the requirement of an integrated assessment that the principles and elements of SIA have become part of how IFI clients are required to assess and manage the potential or actual adverse impacts that a project’s activities may cause or contribute to. The content of this standard can be summarised as follows:

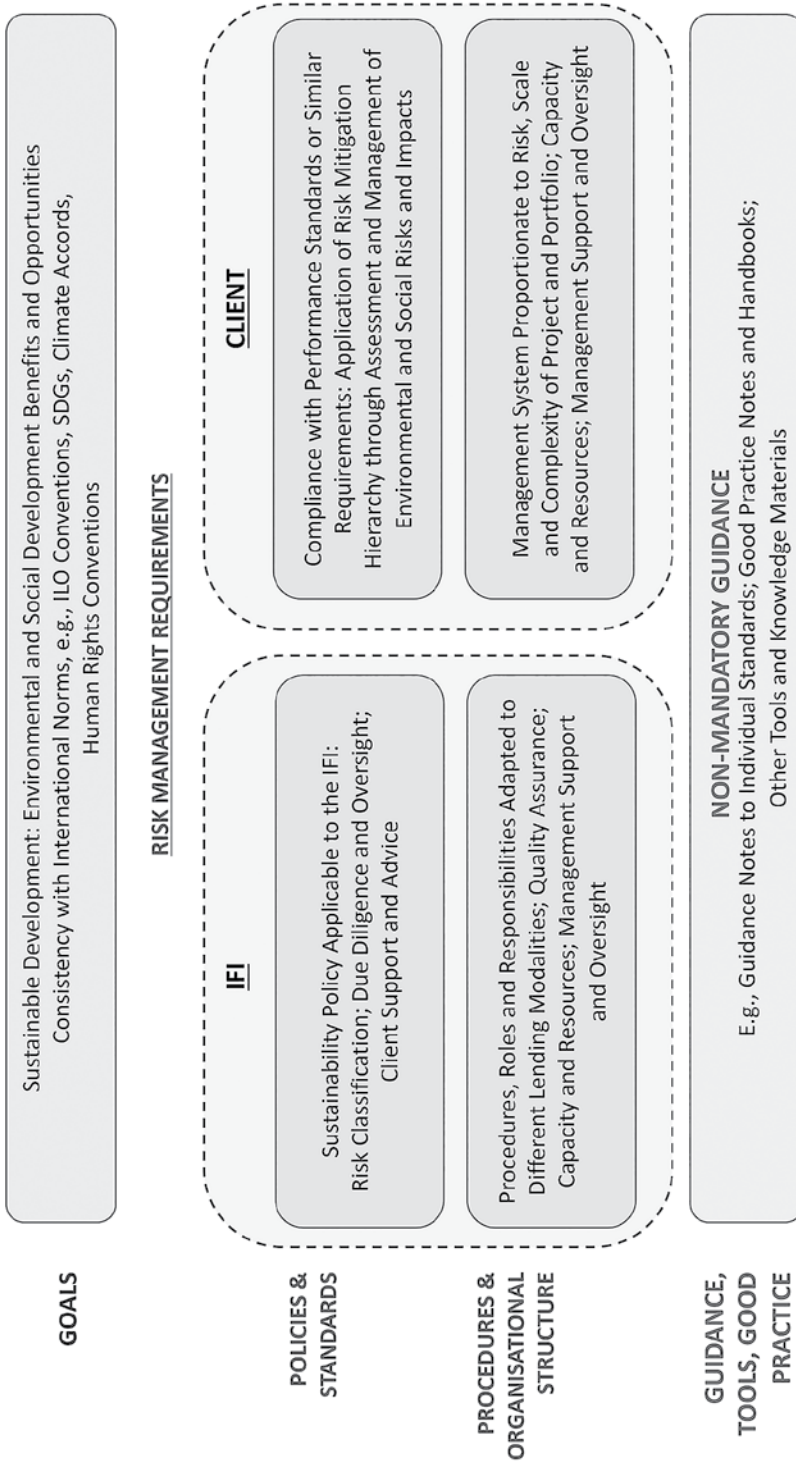
Performance Standard 1 establishes the importance of (i) integrated assessment to identify the environmental and social impacts, risks, and opportunities of projects; (ii) effective community engagement through disclosure of project-related information and consultation with local communities on matters that directly affect them; and (iii) the client’s management of environmental and social performance throughout the life of the project. (IFC, 2012, PS1, para 3)

Similarly, the World Bank (2018, ESS1, para 23) in its Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) stated that: ‘The Borrower will carry out an environmental and social assessment of the project to assess the environmental and social risks and impacts of the project throughout the project life cycle.’ Thus, the ‘assessment’ is increasingly being defined, not as a single study resulting in a stand-alone report with recommendations, but as an ongoing process throughout the project’s lifetime. Within IFI circles, this is generally referred to as the ‘Environmental and Social Assessment process’ (ESA). ESA is largely similar in content and key principles to SIA as understood by the International Association for Impact Assessment (Vanclay et al., 2015), but IFIs have adopted the term ESA to distinguish the overall process from the more localised, site-specific environmental or social impact assessment studies. Several such studies may be undertaken at different times and in different locations within the overall ‘umbrella’ of the ESA process. The discussion in this chapter refers primarily to ESA as a process throughout the lifetime of a project.

Some characteristics of ESA as a process are:

- environmental and social considerations are expected to be addressed in an integrated and coordinated manner;
- early screening and scoping will determine whether particular attention, in-depth studies, and mitigation measures will be required for different project-related risk factors, such as physical and social displacement, gender-based violence, impacts on critical natural habitats, risks to Indigenous communities, or pollution and hazardous waste;
- the assessment includes an ongoing process of stakeholder engagement; and
- the results from the assessment and stakeholder engagement process should be reflected in project management decisions related to design and implementation.

for a detailed discussion of principles and elements for stakeholder engagement, see the publication issued jointly by a large number of IFIs, *Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement: A Joint*



Source: Author.

Figure 9.1 Generic framework for the environmental and social standards of an IFI

Publication of the Multilateral Financial Institutions Group on Environmental and Social Standards (Kvam, 2019).

Environmental and social considerations have evolved from being treated largely as an externality to how projects are planned and implemented in different sectors, or as a document-centric focus on producing a study and a report, to the explicit integration of these considerations into project management decisions throughout the project's lifecycle. Figure 9.2 illustrates how the ESA process may have different project decision milestones throughout the different stages or phases of a typical investment project.

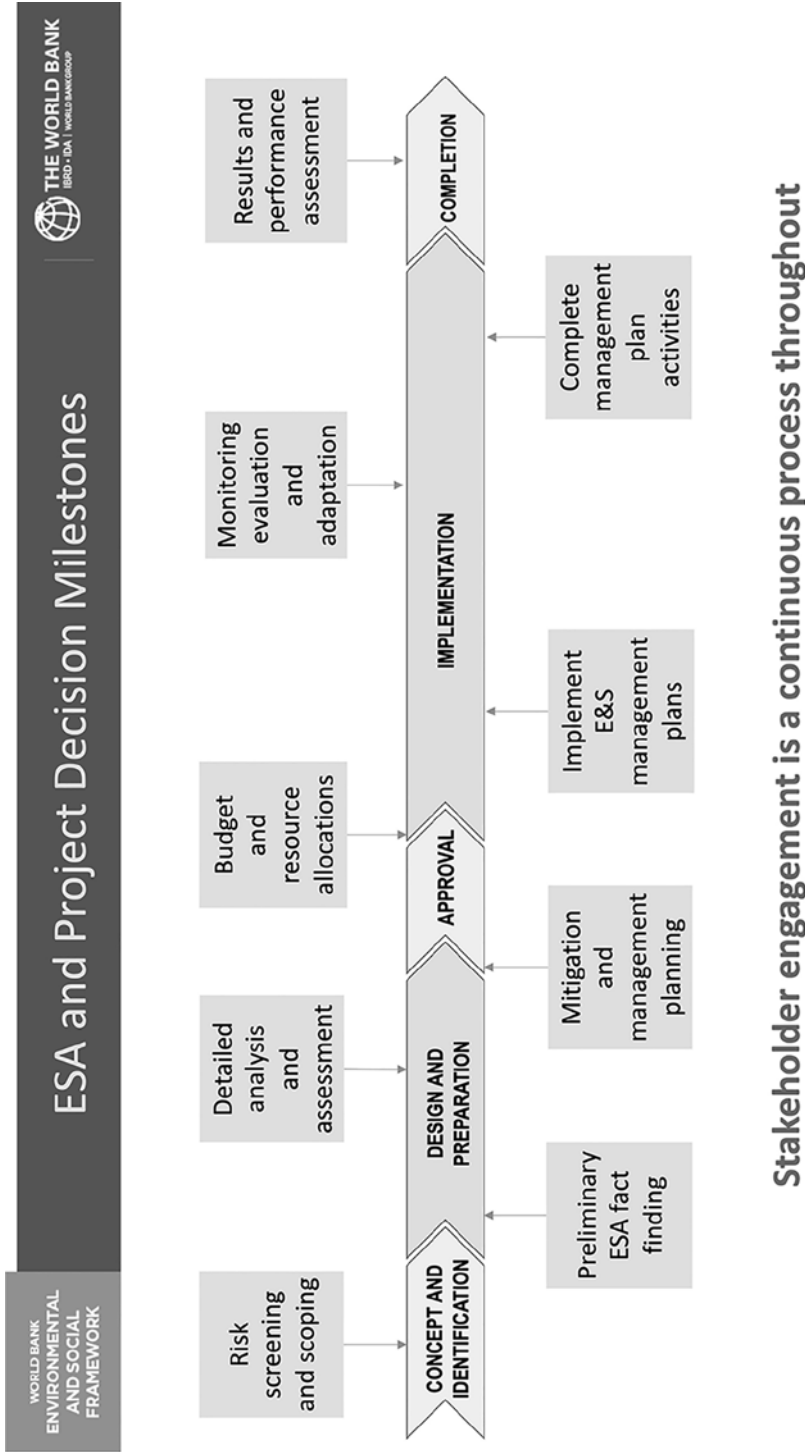
By defining ESA as a process with different milestones and decision-points, the IFI approach is relatively agnostic when it comes to which methodologies, instruments, specific studies, and action plans are expected. Annex 1 to the World Bank's Environmental and Social Standard 1 describes several methods and tools within the ESA process that may be applied, depending on the nature and circumstances of a project, including:

- Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA)
- Environmental and Social Audit
- Hazard or Risk Assessment
- Cumulative Impact Assessment
- Social and Conflict Analysis
- Environmental and Social Management Plan
- Environmental and Social Management Framework
- Regional ESIA
- Sectoral ESIA
- Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment

THE RISK MITIGATION HIERARCHY

The expected outcome of an assessment process is that baseline pre-project conditions will be improved by the project. This is done by applying a risk mitigation hierarchy at the project level. Performance Standard 1 specifically lists as one of its objectives as: 'To adopt a mitigation hierarchy to anticipate and avoid, or where avoidance is not possible, minimise, and, where residual impacts remain, compensate/offset for risks and impacts to workers, Affected Communities, and the environment.' The practical steps involved in applying a risk mitigation hierarchy are:

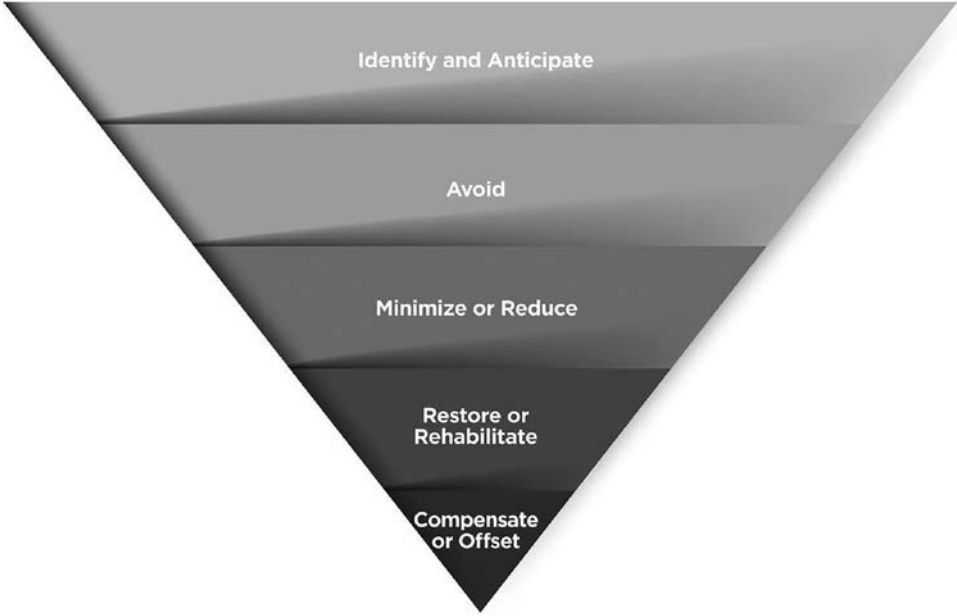
1. Identify and anticipate risks of potential adverse impacts, through analysis and stakeholder engagement.
2. Avoid potential adverse impacts, applying an alternatives analysis including a no-project scenario.
3. Minimise or reduce the impacts, for example by reducing the physical footprint of a project through changes in design of civil works.
4. Restore or rehabilitate where possible, for example by providing alternative access to water sources that have been cut off by a project.
5. Compensate or offset remaining and unavoidable impacts, for example by providing resettlement assistance to displaced populations.



Source: World Bank 2022 (PowerPoint slide from the 'ESF in Practice' training course for government agencies).

Figure 9.2 Environmental and social assessment as a continuous process throughout the project lifecycle

Going through these stages of the risk mitigation hierarchy, the risks of adverse impacts become successively reduced or eliminated, with the objective of no net harm resulting from the project within a reasonable timeframe. The mitigation hierarchy can be shown in an inverted pyramid, as in Figure 9.3.



Source: IDB Invest (2020).

Figure 9.3 *The mitigation hierarchy*

The environmental and social assessment and management process should document how these stages are being addressed, and confirm the successful compensation, assistance, or offset of any remaining adverse impacts after reasonable efforts have been made to avoid or minimise risks. Where possible, the documentation should document the degree to which adverse impacts have been avoided, e.g. that displacement has been reduced by 80 per cent through alternative designs or other measures.

In applying the risk mitigation hierarchy, different studies, consultation events, action plans, and mitigation mechanisms may be sequenced and undertaken both before a project is approved, and during the project’s implementation phase. This is different from earlier approaches. The focus is shifting towards results and outcomes, often achieved in a more flexible, incremental, and gradual fashion, and away from a rigid document-centric or procedural, ‘front-loaded’ set of requirements. As an example, the World Bank requires its clients

to prepare a minimum of three documents and action plans for every project before it can be approved by its Board. They are:

- Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP). All projects are required to consult with key stakeholders before projects are approved, and to continue engagement during project implementation. This includes establishing a grievance mechanism where stakeholders can submit concerns and complaints about the project.
- Labour Management Procedures (LMP). All projects have workers, whether directly recruited for the project, workers employed by contractors, government officials on secondment, community workers, or other categories of workers. Occupational health and safety issues, prohibitions on child and forced labour, workers' right to association and grievance mechanisms, and principles of non-discrimination are reflected in the LMP.
- Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP). This reflects agreed-upon actions during project implementation, and is part of a project's legal agreement. It describes the continued ESA process, including any studies, action plans, and mitigation mechanisms that may be undertaken during project implementation.

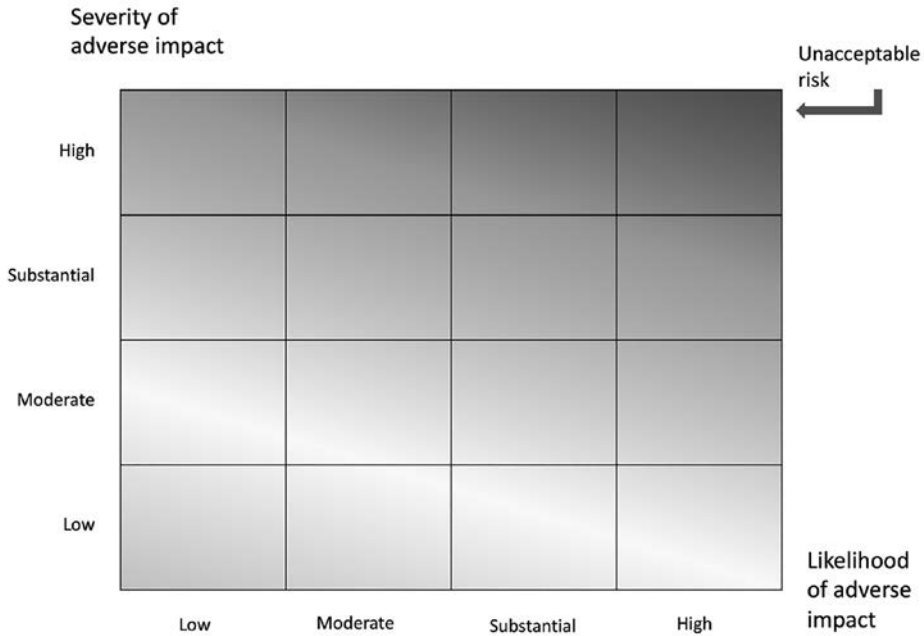
While these three documents are required for all projects, other studies and action plans may be required in specific circumstances, depending on the relevant risk factors. The World Bank's ESF lists several documents and plans that may be required depending on the nature of the project. Some of these documents that are related to potential social impacts include:

- Security Force Risk Assessment
- Action Plan to Address Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment
- Road Safety Plan
- Resettlement Framework and/or Plan
- Indigenous Peoples Framework and/or Plan
- Integrated Community Development Plan
- Cultural Heritage Management Plan

Some of these studies and action plans may require specialised knowledge and the use of external consultants or independent experts, especially in high-risk circumstances. As an example, IFC's Performance Standard 8 (Cultural Heritage, para 14) states: 'The client will retain external experts to assist in the assessment and protection of critical cultural heritage.' Similarly, the IDB (2020) notes in its Environmental and Social Policy Framework (para 3.8) that: 'the IDB may require the Borrower to engage stakeholders and third parties, such as independent experts, local communities, or civil society organisations, to complement or verify project monitoring information.' Even where independent, third-party expertise or support may be required, it remains a client responsibility to integrate findings into management decisions. It is therefore important that those responsible for overall project design and implementation maintain oversight and coordination of the process throughout, and that they develop management systems, frameworks, and plans that are implementable.

RISK FACTORS

IFC (2012, PS1, footnote 2) defines environmental and social risk as: ‘[A] a combination of the probability of certain hazard occurrences and the severity of impacts resulting from such an occurrence.’ This can be illustrated in a heatmap, as shown in Figure 9.4.



Source: Author.

Figure 9.4 Heatmap of risk

There are two important things to note about Figure 9.4. First, in looking at probability and severity of an adverse impact, the figure shows that severity is weighted more heavily than probability. An example would be a project impact that may threaten the collective well-being and viability of an Indigenous community. Even if the likelihood of this occurring is low or moderate, the risk should still be considered high, given the consequences if it were to occur. Second, some risks may be unacceptable. If the severity of a potential adverse impact is high, and the likelihood of it occurring is substantial or high even with proposed mitigation measures, the project should be reconsidered or redesigned.

In identifying environmental and social risk factors, different typologies, or categories, of risks can be defined. These categories are not always clearly differentiated in IFI policy frameworks; sometimes a number of factors are just listed. However, the different factors or

risk categories generally have different implications for what a client is expected to address in the management process. Such categories of risk factors may include (Kvam, 2018):

1. Cause: A project's 'footprint', in relation to scale, complexity, and likely direct impacts. Where information about project siting or direct impacts are unknown, consider inherent risk such as typical hazards related to occupational health and safety in different sectors, or typical differences in risk levels between for example an infrastructure project and a health project.
2. Contribution: More indirect risk that the project may be associated with or contribute to, often related to third-party actions, such as cumulative risk, elements of risk in a project's supply chain; project-related labour influx; and increases in gender-based violence.
3. Context: Risk factors in the operating environment, such as critical natural habitats, and the presence of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, often characterised by high levels of social exclusion and inequality, for example based on gender or other social identities. Contextual risk factors also include risks related to poor governance; corruption; pervasive human rights abuses; conflict in the operating environment over land, power, or other resources; or natural disasters and climate-related threats.
4. Performance-related risks, related to the responsible institutions' capacity, resources, and commitment to address environmental and social issues. This would include the performance of third parties, such as government agencies or other institutions whose functions affect the project. It would also include contractor and sub-contractor performance.

Earlier environmental and social policy frameworks were largely limited to the first two risk categories, direct and more indirect adverse impacts a project may cause or contribute to. These may be termed risks *from* a project, and remain the primary concern and responsibility of IFIs and their clients in individual project settings. As noted earlier, the focus in earlier frameworks was largely on environmental impacts, with the exception of resettlement and impacts on Indigenous peoples. Other project-induced social impacts, such as risks of gender-based violence or risks of elite capture and increased social inequality, were not addressed in the policy frameworks. That is not to say these broader social issues were ignored in all cases. There are numerous examples of projects that addressed a broader set of social issues, both risks and development benefits and opportunities. But as long as potential risk factors were not explicitly mentioned in the policy frameworks, they were not addressed systematically and consistently. More recent risk management frameworks have broadened the scope of the assessment and management process to also cover the second set of risk factors, contextual and performance-related risk. These risk factors may be termed risks *to* the project.

Risk factors do not operate independently of each other. Risks from the project, and risks to the project, interact and influence each other. Risks of poor governance or weak capacity may jeopardise the project's ability to implement necessary mitigation action. Broader contextual and performance-related risks can exacerbate adverse impacts from a project: a project may contribute to competition and conflict over land and natural resources, and pre-existing conflict and violence may affect disadvantaged and vulnerable groups more than others when it comes to impacts from a project such as physical or economic displacement. This set of interrelated risk factors is illustrated in Figure 9.5.



Source: Kvam (2018).

Figure 9.5 *Interrelated risk factors*

RISK CLASSIFICATION AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

As part of their due diligence process, IFIs consider the combination of risk factors and assign an environmental and social risk classification to the project. Traditionally, this classification was applied prior to a project’s appraisal and approval, and frequently had procedural implications such as the nature of the EIA required. More recent frameworks, such as the World Bank’s ESF, also focus on degree of effort, support, and oversight proportionate to the risk levels of a project. The risk classification is also applied in a more dynamic manner, subject to review and change as necessary during the lifetime of a project, for example if unexpected circumstances increase the risk, or if client performance is significantly different from expected.

The comprehensive set of risk factors that should be addressed through the ESA process involves a large number of variables. Many of these can change during the lifetime of a project. Client performance, for example, may be limited at first, but may improve with capacity building and allocation of budget and staffing resources. This combination of factors and their dynamic nature reduces predictability, and makes it less appropriate to depend on up-front procedural requirements, or to believe that a ‘one size fits all’ approach is sufficient.

The success measure of an environmental and social assessment process in projects supported by IFIs is not that it will guarantee that there will be no adverse impacts – which is impossible – but that it will provide a sound basis for a management system that can: anticipate and minimise risks; address issues and challenges appropriately when they arise; and respond

effectively to unforeseen circumstances. Even with the best of planning, there will always be unknown variables, including related to people's behaviour and responses to a project. Plans get delayed, costs go up, circumstances change, and opposition arises. Current IFI frameworks therefore stress the need for adaptive management. For example, IFC's Performance Standard 1 (para 16) states that: 'Recognizing the dynamic nature of the project, the management program will be responsive to changes in circumstances, unforeseen events, and the results of monitoring and review.' IDB's 2020 framework (PS1, para 25) also stresses this dynamic aspect: 'In addition to recording information to track performance and establishing relevant operational controls, the Borrower should use dynamic mechanisms, such as internal inspections and audits, where relevant, to verify compliance and progress toward the desired outcomes.'

A systematic approach to adaptive management as part of the ESA process will involve several steps and elements. They may include:

1. Determine what the relevant issues are that should be monitored (risks, opportunities, expected outcomes and impacts), informed by the environmental and social assessment and stakeholder engagement process.
2. Establish baseline (pre-project) data and benchmarks, to have a point of comparison and clarity on what the project expects to achieve, to be able to judge progress and ultimately document whether adverse environmental or social impacts were avoided or mitigated, and what sustainability benefits were achieved.
3. Determine what the indicators should be, including through consultations with local stakeholders, with the appropriate mix of quantitative and qualitative indicators, using both primary and secondary data sources.
4. Determine what the units of analysis should be (e.g. species to be monitored; individuals and households, other).
5. Determine research methodology (assessments, surveys, stakeholder interviews, reporting data from grievance mechanisms, participatory or third-party monitoring, etc.).
6. Undertake regular reviews by senior management to decide on corrective actions needed where appropriate.
7. Revise action and commitment plans when appropriate as a result of changing circumstances or other factors.
8. Complement ongoing monitoring with periodic independent reviews and evaluations focusing on outcomes and results.
9. Provide regular reporting and public disclosure of analytical work and action plans, stakeholder engagement process, and updates on performance and progress with action plans.

A principle of proportionality should be applied to the ESA process: the assessment process, with its associated management programme, should reflect a degree of effort, timing, and sequencing of actions, that is proportional to project risk, scale, and complexity. IDB (2020, PS1, para 17) describes this principle of proportionality as follows:

The level of detail and complexity of this collective management program and the priority of the identified measures and actions will be commensurate with the project's risks and impacts and will take account of the outcome of the engagement process with project-affected people and other relevant stakeholders as appropriate.

PRIORITIES AND CHALLENGES IN THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The current IFI environmental and social standards address social risk factors in two ways. First, through requirements defined in specific, stand-alone policies and standards. Typical examples of this include the standards for topics such as: Involuntary Resettlement; Indigenous Peoples; Labor and Working Conditions; and Community Health and Safety. Some IFIs, like the World Bank, EBRD, and IDB, also have stand-alone standards for Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure. Second, some issues may be treated as cross-cutting themes applicable across all policies and standards. Gender-related concerns, for example, are largely treated as a cross-cutting theme. The IFC and several other IFIs include requirements for stakeholder engagement as a cross-cutting theme, discussed in detail in PS1, rather than as a stand-alone standard. Social concerns in risk management focus particularly on the potential adverse impacts on disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. Clients are expected to take specific steps to address the needs and concerns of such individuals and groups. The ESA process should include the following actions (IDB Invest, 2020):

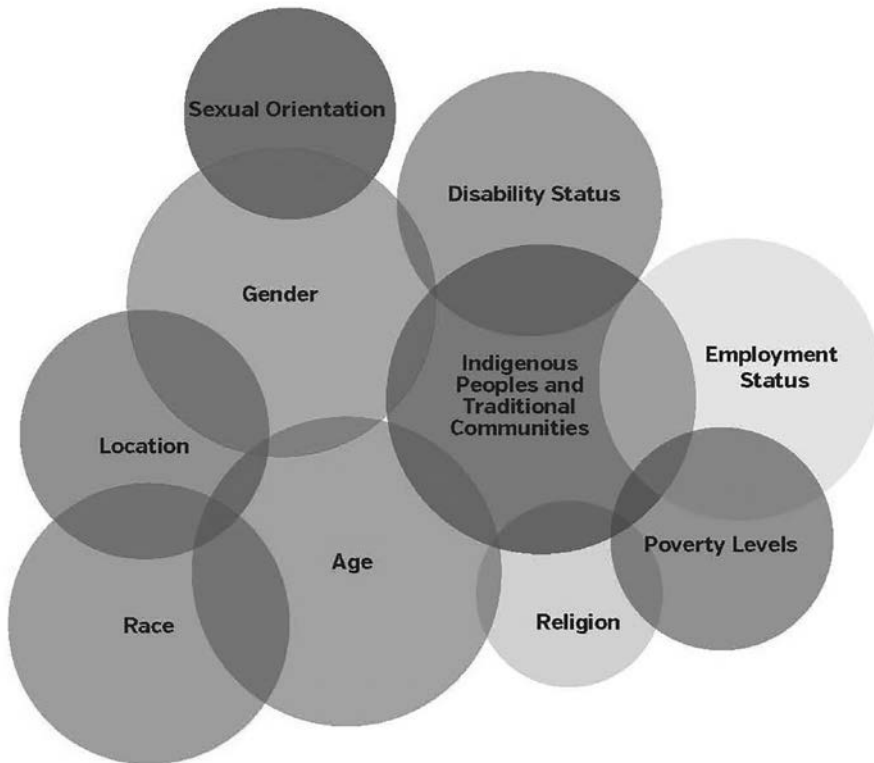
1. identify who is disadvantaged or vulnerable in the project setting;
2. assess how project risks and benefits may affect different groups in different ways;
3. consider how discrimination or bias may exclude some individuals or groups from equal opportunity; and
4. design differentiated measures to (i) avoid or mitigate adverse impacts doing work on Brian Castellani's including in relation to discrimination; (ii) promote diversity and inclusion and provide access to project benefits; and (iii) involve disadvantaged or vulnerable groups in the consultation process related to the project.

Language reflecting these principles has been incorporated into the policy frameworks of most IFIs. The World Bank (2018, ESS1), for example, states that one of the objectives for the risk assessment and management process is, 'To adopt differentiated measures so that adverse impacts do not fall disproportionately on the disadvantaged or vulnerable, and they are not disadvantaged in sharing development benefits and opportunities resulting from the project.' The World Bank (2021) has adopted a Directive with specific requirements for the institution's staff and management: *Addressing Risks and Impacts on Disadvantaged or Vulnerable Individuals or Groups*. This directive defines 'disadvantaged or vulnerable' as:

those individuals or groups who, by virtue of, for example, their age, gender, ethnicity, religion, physical, mental or other disability, social, civic or health status, sexual orientation, gender identity, economic disadvantages or indigenous status, and/or dependence on unique natural resources, may be more likely to be adversely affected by the project impacts and/or more limited than others in their ability to take advantage of a project's benefits. Such an individual/group is also more likely to be excluded from/unable to participate fully in the mainstream consultation process and as such may require specific measures and/or assistance to do so. This will take into account considerations relating to age, including the elderly and minors, and including in circumstances where they may be separated from their family, the community or other individuals upon whom they depend. (World Bank, 2021, Section II)

Other IFIs have a similar focus on disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in their risk management frameworks. The ESA process should assess the degree to which the combination of identities is likely to have different implications than when each factor is seen in isolation.

Being female, Indigenous, and illiterate may exacerbate levels of poverty, social exclusion, and vulnerability. The fact that individuals fall into several categories that interrelate and affect each other is referred to as intersectionality. The combination of two or more of these identities can constitute cumulative disadvantages. Some examples of such identities and their overlap are illustrated in Figure 9.6.



Source: Kvam (2018).

Figure 9.6 Intersectionality

There are some differences in terms of which groups and individuals are listed as potentially vulnerable and disadvantaged in a project context. The IFC (2012, PS1, footnote 18), for example, notes that:

This disadvantaged or vulnerable status may stem from an individual's or group's race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status. The client should also consider factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, culture, literacy, sickness, physical or mental disability, poverty or economic disadvantage, and dependence on unique natural resources.

In this list of examples of people who may be vulnerable, the IFC does not explicitly mention sexual orientation and gender identity. In contrast, IDB Invest's recent Sustainability Policy addresses this explicitly:

IDB Invest is committed to the identification of potential gender-based risks and impacts and requires clients to implement effective measures to avoid, prevent or mitigate such risks and impacts. IDB Invest recognizes that diverse sexual orientations and gender identities may cause people to be excluded and/or become more vulnerable to negative project impacts, often barring them from taking advantage of the opportunities available to other members of the community. Equality includes promoting access to equal opportunities and full participation in society for peoples that face barriers due to their identity. (IDB Invest 2020 Sustainability Policy, para 21)

IFIs also have different approaches to how human rights issues are to be addressed. Explicit reference to the obligation to respect human rights in project settings has been incorporated more clearly in policy frameworks applicable to the private sector than for the public sector. This is both because of the broad uptake of the United Nations (2011) *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights*, and because many governments consider IFI requirements explicitly related to human rights in public sector projects to constitute unacceptable interference in domestic political matters. The World Bank, for example, describes the aspirational aspects of helping clients meet their human rights commitments in the ESF Vision Statement, but does not explicitly mention the obligation to respect human rights in the ESA process applicable to potential project-related adverse impacts. In contrast, IDB Invest (2020, para 17) has language reflecting the requirement to respect human rights in project settings:

IDB Invest promotes the responsibility of business to respect human rights. To that end, in accordance with the Sustainability Policy and the Performance Standards incorporated herein, IDB Invest requires its clients to have in place an approach to assess potential human rights risks and impacts, respect human rights, avoid infringement on the human rights of others, and address adverse human rights risks and impacts in IDB Invest-supported project.

While some social risk factors have been covered by policy statements for many years, especially project-induced displacement, and impacts on Indigenous peoples, they still remain challenging in practice. This is in part because international standards generally require more in terms of risk assessment and management than national law and practice in most countries. Other topics are more recent in terms of the recognition of their importance or need to be clearer in how they are to be addressed. They include, but are not limited to:

- application of the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) in certain situations affecting Indigenous Peoples;
- gender-based violence, and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity;
- risks of disproportionate force applied by project security personnel;
- the importance of ensuring access and opportunity for persons with disabilities;
- risks of child labour and forced labour in the supply chain;
- the importance of taking contextual risk factors into account;
- risks of violence and retaliation against project stakeholders such as environmental defenders and human rights activists; and
- risks related to contractors and contractor management.

Many of these issues were addressed in general terms or referenced briefly in earlier policy frameworks, including in the 2012 IFC Performance Standards. However, experience has shown that there is a need for more explicit and in-depth guidance on how to address these and other social risk factors. Operational manuals, handbooks, and good practice manuals are published on a regular basis by IFIs on these and other topics. Directors and senior advisers responsible for environmental and social risk management in their respective institutions also coordinate and discuss among themselves, including through semi-annual meetings of the MFI Working Group on Environmental and Social Standards. This type of coordination and sharing of experiences has contributed to a gradual convergence and greater consistency of policy content and methodological approaches among the IFIs.

CONCLUSION: COMPETENCIES AND CHALLENGES FOR PROFESSIONALISATION

Experience to date shows that the quality of the ESA process as conducted by IFI clients and borrowers, whether undertaken directly by the responsible agency or with the help of external consultants, has been highly variable. This is not surprising. There are a number of reasons why this is still an evolving field. They include, but are not limited to:

- National systems for environmental and social risk management generally have gaps when compared with international good practice and IFI requirements. Normative frameworks (legislation, policies, procedures) are more focused on environmental impacts than on a balanced approach to environmental and social risk factors.
- Implementation capacity and experience is often limited, even where there is more attention to social risk factors in national normative frameworks.
- The ESA process as described in this chapter requires that environmental and social risk factors are integrated into design and implementation decisions throughout the lifetime of a project. This requires a multi-disciplinary team approach with strong management support and oversight, and allocation of appropriate resources. This approach is still rare. To the extent that environmental and social issues are addressed at all, they are often treated as externalities to the ‘main’ project.
- Current good practice for an ESA process stresses the ability to consider the combination of a wide variety of risk factors, as described in this chapter. It stresses judgement, flexibility, and adaptive management. Many decision-makers and practitioners are more comfortable with a standardised ‘check-list’ approach, and more used to judging quality and compliance from a document-centric perspective than in terms of results and outcomes on the ground.
- Environmental and social specialists undertaking ESA-related studies often have a relatively narrow technical focus. They may be specialists in issues related to involuntary resettlement, but have limited experience addressing risks of gender-based violence. Yet current IFI risk management frameworks require consideration of a wide set of environmental and social risk factors, as described above. When multiple specialists are hired to do stand-alone studies on particular topics such as health and safety, Indigenous peoples, or human rights impacts, there is a risk of duplication of effort, limited coordination, or con-

sistency, and challenges to integrating the various topics into an overall project operations manual with practical steps for project implementers.

- Social scientists frequently lack the training and experience required to move from identifying risks and problems in a project setting, to providing practical and implementable solutions. This requires ‘sector literacy’; familiarity with very different technical aspects of sectors such as transport, energy, education, health, and other sectors. Generic advice about the importance of social issues is unlikely to result in more than irritation and a perception that the inputs are emotional or advocacy-oriented, and not practical from an implementation perspective.
- Social analysis, especially when combined with inputs from the stakeholder engagement process, often makes extensive use of qualitative data, for example when trying to assess cultural values, mechanisms for social exclusion, or local relationships and power dynamics. This analysis is highly context-specific. Findings and recommendations from the social assessment process may be perceived as vague and less rigorous than more quantitative data and research, less amenable to standardised and predictable methods, and less convincing to some policy-makers and project managers.

These challenges relate to the authorising environment – how open decision-makers are to integrating social considerations into project planning and implementation. They also relate to the skills, experience, and effectiveness of social specialists working on projects supported by IFIs. While the demand for social specialists has increased strongly in recent years, project authorities and IFIs have found it difficult to recruit people with the right combination of analytical, participatory, and operational skills required to be effective in these projects. Competency in environmental and social risk management goes beyond academic insight: It requires the ability to ‘translate’ such insight into practical and applicable steps within an overall project management setting. In recent years, IFIs have put significant efforts into ‘professionalising’ the role of social specialists working on projects, whether inside the IFI or on client-managed projects. The World Bank has established a formal accreditation process for the institution’s environmental and social specialists, with a set of minimum requirements for all, and a panel interview as a requirement to receive their accreditation. The accreditation process defines core competencies as including:

- Technical skills and knowledge, including familiarity with all the environmental and social standards under the risk management framework
- Process and operational skills
- Relevant project-related or corporate experience
- Demonstration of judgement
- Communications and behavioural skills

With the convergence and harmonisation of environmental and social standards among IFIs discussed in this chapter, there is increasing clarity on the topics and risk factors that need to be addressed, and on the need to integrate stakeholder concerns throughout the lifetime of a project. When done well, the environmental and social assessment process is now seen as a core value proposition and integral to the design and implementation of projects.

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10. Social impact assessment for project-affected communities

Ciaran O’Faircheallaigh

INTRODUCTION

An important starting point for this chapter is the question of what is meant by ‘community’. As used here, it has two distinct but related meanings. The first consists of a human settlement located adjacent to, or affected by, a project or activity that is the subject of a Social Impact Assessment (SIA). Its members share a place of residence and an experience of impact or an anticipation of impact, although the nature of that experience and assumptions that underlie that anticipation may vary between individuals and groups within a community. The second meaning, highly relevant in an Indigenous context, involves people who share economic, cultural, and social ties through their connection with, and responsibilities for, an area of land or water affected by a project or proposed project. They may not reside in one place, and indeed may be widely dispersed. Yet they represent a social, and cultural community and, again, may have an experience of impact or an anticipation of impact, the nature of which may vary.

Use of the term, ‘community’, in either of these two senses does not imply a single attitude or approach to a project among community members, or shared interests in relation to a project or to the distribution of its costs and benefits. Neither does it exclude the possibility that elites may exist whose interests do not coincide with those of the majority (Igoe, 2006; Sanz, 2019). Indeed, many communities are divided in their attitude to large-scale commercial development and regarding distribution of associated costs and benefits. A final point to stress about communities is their diversity. A project-affected community may be a tiny Indigenous settlement comprising a few closely related family groups, or a town with a population in the tens of thousands of people whose population is highly diverse in terms of ethnicity, religion, and economic and social characteristics.

An important implication of this discussion is that what community members wish to get from SIA may vary considerably in terms of process and outcome. They may be united in seeking to use SIA to achieve better development outcomes, minimising negative outcomes and maximising positive ones (Vanclay, 2003). However, there may be little consensus on what constitutes ‘better development outcomes’, or on the best means to achieve these. One matter on which all community members are likely to be united is that the SIA should not, in itself, be a source of negative impacts. This could easily occur if, for instance, one segment of a community is not given the opportunity to participate in an SIA, or if an SIA highlights differences in a community but offers no means of managing or resolving these differences.

In general, communities want to be able to control the factors, including development projects, that affect their economic, social, and cultural wellbeing (Tetreault, 2020; Vanclay, 2020). With few exceptions, the ability of communities to assert that control is circumscribed by the authority exercised by subnational or national governments, and by the decisions of corporations. A rare exception involves a small number of Indigenous communities that, in

certain circumstances, can exercise a veto over industrial development (Hanna & Vanclay, 2013). In practical terms, the issue becomes how SIA can be used to maximise the degree of influence communities can exert in relation to government and corporate decisions that affect their welfare, remembering always that no assumption is made that there is community consensus on what outcomes will contribute positively to its welfare.

A useful framework for considering the interaction between SIA and decision-making is provided by the 1998 Aarhus Convention (Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters) (UNECE, 1998), the first international convention focused solely on public participation in decision-making. While the title of the Convention indicates a specific focus on ‘environmental matters’, the framework it sets out can be applied more broadly, including to economic, social, and cultural matters (Sommermann, 2017). Although only strictly applicable to European countries, it contains the type of legal argument that arguably should apply across the world. The Convention consists of three interrelated pillars: public access to information; public participation in decision-making; and access to redress for citizens who believe they have been denied access to information or the opportunity to participate in decision-making. An additional advantage in using the Aarhus Convention framework is that it recognises the links between different aspects of public participation. Communities need accurate and full information regarding a project if they are to participate in decisions about it, and communities need an effective form of redress if their rights to information and participation are to be guaranteed.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

In the context of SIA, communities require access to information regarding a proposed project and its potential impacts. At a minimum, this should involve details of the physical parameters of the project and associated infrastructure, the timing for project construction, and the likelihood of any expansion beyond its initial scale. The expansion of projects over time is common; for example, liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects typically commence with two ‘trains’ or processing units, but over time may expand to four or six trains. Mining projects may display a similar profile. BHP’s Ekati diamond mine in Canada, for example, announced a 50 per cent increase in capacity soon after it commenced commercial production. A major issue for communities is that key aspects of project plans may change over time, including while the SIA is underway. For example, during the SIA for the Browse LNG Precinct in the Kimberley region of Western Australia, Woodside Energy Ltd announced a reconfiguration of its planned construction schedule and workforce, which meant that construction would involve 6,000 workers rather than the 2,500 initially indicated, most of whom would be recruited from outside the region (KLC, 2010). Given that the local Aboriginal population numbered around 2,500, this increase in the size of the workforce would have profound implications for the project’s social impacts. The inflow of people seeking economic opportunities is a profound disruption affecting communities adjacent to development projects (Bainton & Jackson, 2020; see Chapter 26). This highlights the need for successive rounds of information provision to communities to ensure they are kept apprised of the evolving nature of projects and their likely impacts. However, this is rare, with a single round of information provision typically being the basis on which communities are expected to assess likely project impacts.

Communities require information in relation to themselves. Information regarding a community's demographic, social, and economic characteristics may be lacking, because census or other official data is not published for individual communities, is inaccurate, or is out of date, or because information is not available in the detail required to assess likely impacts and opportunities. For instance, aggregate data may be available on unemployment in a community, but information may not be available regarding the skills and experience of the unemployed, making it difficult to assess whether they will be competitive in applying for the jobs created by a planned project.

The timing of information provision is important. Gaining access to information is of limited or no value to a community if decisions about alternative project designs have already been made, or if government and corporate decision-makers have already decided to proceed with a project. Provision of information at the time a project is planned and initially approved is critical, but the ongoing provision of information to a community is also important, especially for projects with long lives. Some Australian mines established in the 1960s are still operating and will continue to do so for many decades. This raises a fundamental issue regarding SIA. SIA is generally only undertaken when a development is proposed, and so there is no opportunity for a community to use SIA to revisit, in a systematic manner, impacts or management strategies over the life of a project. In some cases, based on company policy and separate from any regulatory approval process, a company might decide to undertake a mid-term SIA. For instance, for Rio Tinto's Argyle diamond mine and its Weipa bauxite mine, both in north Australia, an SIA was undertaken well into the project life as part of the negotiation around Impact and Benefit Agreements with the Aboriginal Traditional Owners. Information on social impacts could be collected and provided to communities through an ongoing monitoring regime, but, whereas such regimes are regularly established for environmental impacts, this rarely happens for social impacts (O'Faircheallaigh, 2020; see Chapter 34).

A final point regarding information involves the form in which and the venues in which it is provided. The Aarhus Convention (Article 5.2) states that information should be made available to the public in a manner that is 'transparent' and 'effectively accessible'. In many cases, information provided to communities through EIA or SIA processes fail to meet these criteria. Information is usually prepared by project proponents or the consultants they employ, and there is little transparency about the assumptions that underlie it, or about whether it has been subject to independent review. A problem that occurs in many jurisdictions is that information is provided in a language other than that spoken in the affected community; it is made available only at regional or national capitals far from the community; it requires responses in timeframes that leave little opportunity for community members to absorb and discuss it; and/or it is in a written form that is highly technical. Schilling-Vacaflor and Eichler (2017, pp. 1449–1450) recount how in Indigenous communities in Bolivia:

active participation has also been limited within the meetings themselves, as a result of the technical and legal language that has characterized these encounters ... This is especially the case because the drafts of the EIAs – highly technical documents that are difficult for lay-people to understand – form the basis for discussing the project's anticipated impacts. Prior consultation has therefore become a dialogue between a few skilled individuals and the MHE [the Ministry of Hydrocarbons and Energy], while participating community members have been relegated to the spectator benches.

Communities need information to be provided at places that are known and readily accessible. Yakovleva (2011) described how the access of Evenki communities in Eastern Siberia to

information about a proposed oil pipeline was limited by a failure to provide prior notification of public meetings, holding meetings in urban centres rather than in affected communities, and failing to provide transport to enable the Evenki people to attend. Information provision events also need to align with the temporal cycle of the community, by holding meetings at the times community members are most likely to be available, and organising multiple meetings when various groups have different time constraints. Communities rarely have access to the expert advice required to critically interrogate information provided by proponents, to identify gaps in information, and to prepare alternative scenarios regarding likely project impacts (Weitzner, 2008; Li, 2009; World Bank, 2011; O'Faircheallaigh, 2017; Schilling-Vacaflor & Eichler, 2017).

Successive rounds of engagement will normally be required to give time to the community for information to be absorbed, and for additional information to be provided by those conducting the SIA in response to questions from the community. Some SIAs undertaken as part of regulatory processes are conducted in this way. For example, the SIA for the proposed Byerwen Coal Project in Central Queensland involved four rounds of community engagement focused on key points in the regulatory process (release of draft terms of reference; final terms of reference and conduct of SIA fieldwork; release of draft environmental impact statement and social impact management plan; and finalisation of the EIA and commencement of pre-construction activity). In addition to community meetings, numerous meetings were held with community groups and government, industry and Indigenous organisations, and face-to-face meetings were held with more than 100 individuals (Coffey Environments, 2013; for an example in an Indigenous context, see KLC, 2010). However, it is not uncommon for engagement to be organised around one-off provision of information and a small number of public meetings.

In the Indigenous context, a response to these shortcomings has been the emergence of community-controlled impact assessment (CCIA) (O'Faircheallaigh, 2017; Gibson et al., 2018). CCIA can be conducted independently of statutory impact assessment processes and used by a community to obtain and disseminate information regarding a proposed project and determine its position in relation to it. Alternatively, the Indigenous component can be 'extracted' from the statutory process, conducted by the affected Indigenous community, and 'inserted' back into the statutory process. The Indigenous impact assessment report then constitutes part of the documentation on which the responsible government minister makes decisions in relation to the project (O'Faircheallaigh, 2017).

CCIAs allow information to be provided in a form and through channels that maximise its accessibility and utility for community members. The Aboriginal Social Impact Assessment for the proposed Browse LNG project in the Kimberley region of Western Australia's north-west coast provides an example. At the request of participants, information was provided primarily through meetings of each affected land-owning group, rather than the more standard approach of using meetings based on residential communities. Meetings were held at venues chosen by the groups themselves, often 'on country' and away from major settlements. Much information provision took the form of widely advertised, day-long meetings of the land-owning groups, which in some cases attracted attendees from throughout the West Kimberley and outside the region. Minimum use was made of printed information materials, with colour maps of the LNG Precinct site and graphic illustrations and 'virtual tours' of the proposed LNG plant being displayed on meeting room walls. Sufficient time was made available for discussion of the information provided, and requests for further information were

noted and acted on after the meetings, where necessary involving follow-up meetings. A large group of community members travelled to the adjacent Pilbara region to view existing LNG plants in operation, an essential initiative so they could gauge, for instance, how far noise from the plants travelled, how far away light was visible at night, and how they appeared from the sea, this being of great interest and concern to ‘sea country’ people who rely heavily on marine resources for their livelihoods. Critical to the success of this approach was the fact that the majority of the team conducting the SIA were local Aboriginal people who understood what was required for effective information provision, including a young man and a young woman who were adept at communicating information to children and teenagers (KLC, 2010).

PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING

The second pillar of the Aarhus Convention framework involves public participation in decision-making. A key issue for communities is the extent to which their participation in SIA allows them to influence the final decision as to whether a proposed project should be allowed to proceed and, if it is, what conditions should be attached to its approval. Providing communities with such influence is not always the intention of statutory or policy-based arrangements for public participation, as illustrated by O’Faircheallaigh’s (2010) framework for classifying participation in EIA, which is equally applicable to SIA. This framework involves three broad rationales for participation. The first is provision of information for decision-makers, which includes filling specific information gaps and increasing information contestability. The second category involves participation, which allows communities some influence over decision-making, but where final decisions lie with external government authorities. The third category involves shifting the locus of decision-making by empowering previously marginalised groups, which can include affected communities.

Only this final category would grant communities control over project development, which rarely occurs within statutory regimes. Even where community-level governments have a role in decision-making, this is usually subject to an override by a higher level of authority. This applies to Country Administrative Boards in Sweden, for example, which are the elected local-level organisations of government. These Boards decide, for instance, whether an exploitation concession should be granted to mining companies that wish to develop orebodies, but the national government can override a Board’s decision (Anshelm & Haikola, 2018).

Communities may gain significant benefits from participation in SIA even if this does not directly involve a capacity to determine project outcomes. It is in the interests of communities to ensure that governments and corporations have access to full and robust information on the populations that will be affected, on the nature of impacts, and on the likely efficacy of mitigation strategies, so that the decision-maker can make the most informed and well-considered decision. Community participation is also essential to ensure that information can be obtained about the fears and hopes that accompany people’s own predictions of the likely effects of projects, which are themselves an important component of social impact (Vanclay, 2003, 2020). Knowledge regarding the aspirations and values of affected populations is also critical to judgments regarding the significance of predicted impacts and the risks associated with development alternatives. Community participation may be essential to provide decision-makers with information about the distribution of costs and benefits from proposed projects across

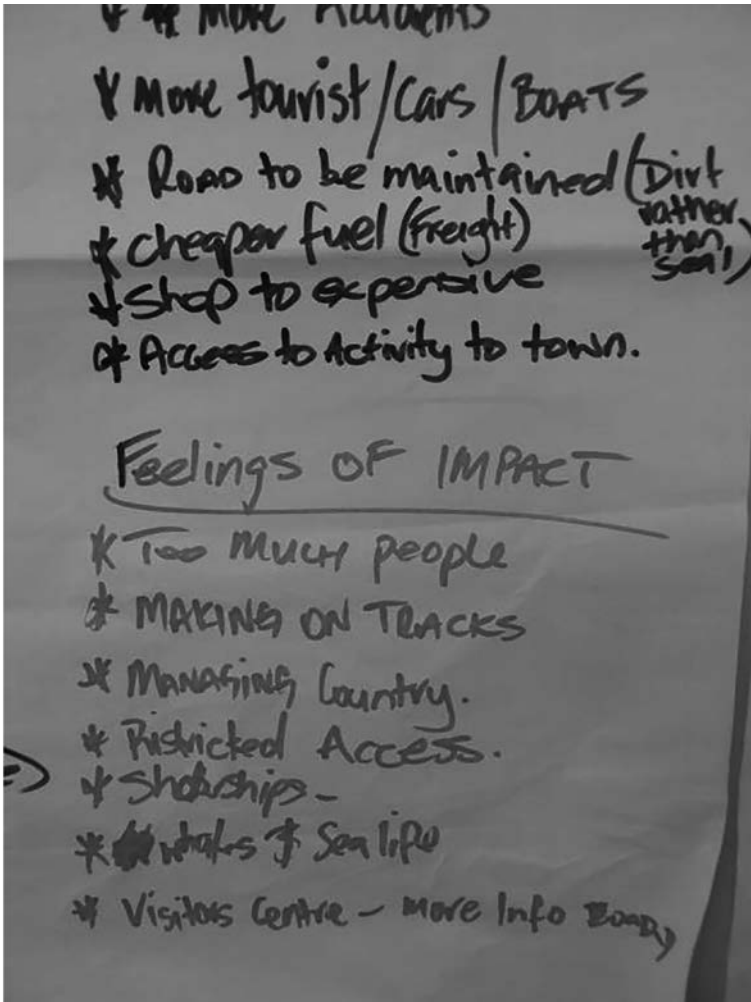
different components of a community, information that is critical in shaping mitigation strategies (O’Faircheallaigh, 2010).

Information generated by community participation in SIA can be critical in ensuring contestability of the information available to government decision-makers. Contestability is especially important given that EIA and SIA reports, which constitute a key input into public decision-making, are generally prepared by proponents or their consultants, who are far from disinterested in their selection, interpretation, and presentation of information. Proponents wish their projects to be approved and the consultants they employ wish to protect their future employment prospects. As a result, both are likely to ignore or downplay negative impacts or risks, and to exaggerate potential project benefits, and may be prone to exaggerate the economic benefits that usually constitute the major justification for large industrial projects (Vanclay, 2020; Laurance, 2022). Proponents may also engage in obfuscation and deliberate exaggeration (Weitzner, 2008). Also important are the worldviews, epistemologies, and values that specific professionals engaged by proponents and their consultants bring to bear in identifying and assessing potential impacts. For instance, engineers or economists are likely to emphasise the concrete and the quantifiable, and so are likely to focus on and privilege certain types of impacts and information, and ignore others (Kapoor, 2001). Community members may see the world and their place in it quite differently.

Three key issues arise in relation to the community provision of information to decision-makers through SIA. An essential precondition involves delivery of information regarding the proposed project in a form accessible to the community, emphasising the inter-connection between the pillars of the Aarhus Convention. Community members cannot offer coherent and relevant responses to a proposed project unless they are fully appraised of the nature of that project and its likely impacts.

The second issue is that SIA must be conducted in a way that facilitates the flow of information to decision-makers addressing all relevant characteristics of a community, and its aspirations and concerns. This encompasses points raised above regarding requirements for effective provision of information to the community, but additional matters are involved when it comes to documenting a community’s aspirations and concerns. One issue is that some community members will not feel comfortable about articulating aspirations and concerns in public meetings or in the presence of other elements of a community. Two manifestations of this issue involving Indigenous communities are that members of each gender may face constraints in discussing certain cultural issues in front of the other, and the very common situation where young people will be reluctant to speak out in front of their elders, especially in relation to matters affecting land and culture. Yet participation by young people is crucial, given that they may be the ones most interested in employment opportunities expected to result from a project, especially where a project may have a life of 40 years or more, and that they will bear the brunt of any negative project impacts into the future. The Aboriginal Social Impact Assessment for the Browse LNG project (which was discussed above) addressed these issues by holding separate men’s and women’s meetings to discuss culturally sensitive matters, and by obtaining permission from the Education Department for the SIA team to meet with school students in their classrooms. The latter approach generated valuable information on the aspirations and concerns of students that they recorded on butcher’s paper and were utilised in the Aboriginal Social Impact Assessment Report (see Figure 10.1, and KLC, 2010).

Major development proposals can be highly contentious. A factor that may inhibit articulation of aspirations and concerns is a fear that this will provoke conflict or violence between



Source: Author.

Figure 10.1 Concerns of youth identified in the Browse LNG SIA

community members with different interests and perspectives. One way of dealing with this is for the SIA team to start discussion among groups that are likely to have common interests and document these, and then canvass contending perspectives in larger meetings, while at the same time proposing possible approaches that can take multiple perspectives into account. O’Faircheallaigh (2017) argued that a major benefit of participative SIA is that it allows groups within a community that have different interests to become aware of each other’s perspectives and to negotiate how these can be accommodated in ways that allow pursuit of coherent strategies in relation to development projects.

The third key issue regarding community provision of information involves the weight that government and corporate decision-makers attach to that information in deciding whether

projects should proceed and in designing mitigation strategies. In some jurisdictions, there is an obligation on statutory decision-makers to pay heed to information provided by communities, although this is often phrased as an obligation to ‘consider’, or ‘take into account’ (e.g. Canada’s Environmental Impact Assessment Act 2019, s22(1), 60(1), 102(2)). Such minimal requirement gives little sense about what impact the information will have, as these terms could encompass a spectrum from casting a cursory glance at the information and dismissing it, to assigning it a determinative role in decisions. The actual outcome is likely to be influenced by wider political considerations, including the ability of a community’s leaders to lobby decision-makers and to use the media to generate public support for the community’s preferred outcome in relation to the project. This ability will also depend on the characteristics of the community, including its cohesiveness, the education level of its members, and its experience in political engagement, as well as the nature of the project and its location. It will be much easier for a community to generate media and public interest in a large mining project in an area of high conservation value than a renewable energy project in an agricultural area of no special ecological or scenic worth.

In recent decades, the emergence of community development agreements (CDAs), which are also known as impact and benefit agreements (IBAs), has offered an additional mechanism, typically outside the regulatory process, through which communities can influence project design and impacts. Initially focused on Indigenous communities affected by extractive projects, CDAs are now also negotiated in a diverse range of contexts, including between real estate developers and local groups in many cities around the world (notably New York, Los Angeles, Toronto, and Dublin). The arrangements for CDAs vary in legal structure, content, and scale, but generally involve formal agreements between developers (private or public) and community representatives or organisations. Typically, regulatory authorities are not involved. CDAs are designed to minimise the negative project impacts and ensure that local communities obtain benefits from development that they would not enjoy in the absence of the agreement (O’Faircheallaigh, 2013).

Research shows that outcomes achieved by communities through CDAs are highly variable. In certain cases, they provide for substantial community influence over the design and ongoing management of projects. The agreements for the Voisey’s Bay nickel project in Labrador, Canada, concluded with affected Innu and Inuit peoples, addressed a series of issues identified through community consultations that were not included in the regulatory conditions attached to the project. The agreements provided that the project would be constructed on a much smaller scale than initially planned by the developer, Inco Ltd, and approved by the government of Labrador and Newfoundland. This outcome reflected the desire of the Innu and Inuit communities to minimise its environmental footprint. They also wished to have a longer mine life at a lower level of production, giving them greater opportunities to develop the capacity needed to take advantage of employment and business development opportunities associated with the project.

Another example involves the agreements negotiated by the Aboriginal Traditional Owners and their regional organisation, the Kimberley Land Council for the Browse LNG project, mentioned earlier. These agreements include numerous provisions designed to shape the environmental, economic, and social impacts of this project, including a provision under which Traditional Owners can require the project operator to build a desalination plant to supply the project’s water supply if they believe use of water from aquifers may harm the environment. Given the general absence of a legal right for communities to stop projects from proceeding,

outcomes of this sort occur only where they can mobilise considerable political and organisational resources to supplement their bargaining power with project developers through litigation, political lobbying, and direct action. Many communities lack these resources and are unable to use agreements to exert substantial influence over government and corporate decisions regarding project design and so over project outcomes (O’Faircheallaigh, 2021).

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

The need for access to justice, or redress, arises because regulatory authorities may fail to provide citizens and communities with the opportunities to participate to which they are entitled (procedural failure), or because regulatory authorities make decisions that do not accord with the information available to them (substantive failure). In relation to SIA, examples of procedural failure might involve omitting to make documentation available to the public in the proscribed form and at proscribed locations, or failing to provide the required time for the public to make submissions on a draft EIA/SIA. For example, Canada’s Impact Assessment Act 2019 requires the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada and the responsible government Minister to publish online within specified timeframes public notices regarding, for instance, the commencement of the different stages in an impact assessment, and the availability of impact assessment documentation and decisions (Impact Assessment Act s19, s28, s31). Failure to make information available in the manner and time required would constitute a procedural failure. The Impact Assessment Act (s63(d)) requires the responsible Minister, in making a decision on a project, to consider ‘the impact that the designated project may have on any Indigenous group and any adverse impact that the designated project may have on the rights of the Indigenous peoples of Canada.’ A substantive failure would occur where a Minister was presented with information indicating that adverse impacts would be substantial but did not attach weight to this information in reaching a decision. Had the Minister done so, a *different decision* would have been made. This issue is illustrated by the action by several environmental groups in challenging a decision by the Province of Labrador and Newfoundland to approve a regional assessment of exploratory oil and gas drilling off the Province’s Atlantic coast. The environmental groups argued that the Province would have come to a different decision had it considered the cumulative effects of all exploratory drilling projects in the region, which the groups argued it was required to do under the relevant legislation (Biggar, 2022).

Two major problems exist for communities in seeking redress where they believe they have been adversely affected by procedural or substantive failure. First, an appeal usually involves court action (see for example Environmental Protection Act (Queensland), s531). The Aarhus Convention (Article 9) requires that procedures to allow redress must be ‘expeditious’ and ‘free of charge or inexpensive’. In reality, legal procedures may be expensive and prolonged, which is likely to deter many citizens and communities from trying to pursue them. It is significant that the legal challenge mounted in Labrador and Newfoundland involved two of the largest environmental organizations in the world, the Sierra Club and the World Wildlife Fund.

The second problem is that, as indicated earlier, legislation dealing with public participation often provides regulatory agencies considerable leeway in determining what constitutes reasonable and appropriate opportunities for communities to participate. Under Canada’s Impact Assessment Act 2019 (s27) ‘the [Impact Assessment] Agency must ensure that the public is provided with an opportunity to participate meaningfully, *in a manner that the Agency considers appropriate*, within the time period specified by the Agency’ (emphasis added). The Minister ‘must provide reasonable public notice of and a reasonable opportunity for anyone to

comment' (s114(3)). While there is room for considerable (and costly) legal debate regarding what would constitute 'meaningful' participation and 'reasonable' notice and opportunity to comment, in any event, the Agency is the ultimate arbiter of what is 'appropriate'.

If a community is not able to seek redress through the courts, the only alternative would be to generate political pressure on regulatory authorities and politicians through the media, political lobbying, and direct action (Hanna et al., 2016). This strategy requires considerable resources, organisational capacity, and community coherence. It is likely to be the *only* alternative available to communities if they form a belief that, as a project moves through construction and operation to closure, impacts on the community are not being addressed by the operator or by regulatory authorities. This is because opportunities to seek redress, like statutory SIA itself, are overwhelmingly focused on the project approval stage. Here also CDAs can be of help, as they constitute legally enforceable instruments that usually cover the entire life of a project, which can be called upon in seeking redress if the mitigation and benefit-sharing arrangements they promise are not complied with. The political and organisational capacity required for communities to negotiate favourable CDAs are equally important if agreements are to play this role (O'Faircheallaigh, 2021). In summary, communities face formidable challenges in seeking redress if they feel that statutory SIA has ignored their procedural rights and their interests.

CONCLUSION

SIA has the potential to provide an effective tool for communities to gain information about proposed development projects, to articulate their aspirations and concerns, and to influence the outcomes of public and corporate decisions, and, ultimately, the effects of projects on the lives and livelihoods of community members. The record of SIA in delivering this potential is patchy, at best. SIAs undertaken to a high professional standard can be a valuable aid in informing communities about planned projects and in allowing them to articulate their aspirations and concerns. However, many statutory SIAs do not achieve this standard, reflecting the fact that the proponents who conduct or fund SIAs are primarily concerned with achieving project approval, not with maximising community participation. No matter what the quality of an SIA, statutory regimes generally provide little assurance that community voices will carry substantial weight with decision-makers, and are largely ineffective in offering communities redress if they believe their information needs have not been met, or they have been excluded from decision-making. Community-controlled SIA combined with negotiation of legally binding contracts with project developers offer the best means of overcoming these deficiencies in statutory SIA.

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11. Social impact assessment for project regulatory processes

Richard Parsons

INTRODUCTION

Most existing guidance on social impact assessment (SIA) is written for a practitioner audience. The overriding purpose of these guidance documents is to explain how to identify, analyse, mitigate, manage, and monitor the social impacts of industrial and infrastructure development throughout the project lifecycle. They exist primarily to specify the attributes and characteristics of good practice SIA. Of course, other stakeholders can apply this guidance too. For example, the list of ‘intended users’ of the SIA guidance document of the International Association for Impact Assessment (Vanclay et al., 2015) is headed by practitioners and proponents, but includes regulators, lenders, communities, and others. Yet, as other chapters of this *Handbook* explicate, these other stakeholders have different needs and priorities, requiring a specific focus. For example, as Ziller (2019) suggests, those reviewing SIAs need guidance to help them achieve planning objectives and/or public policy outcomes.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss key considerations in SIA for regulatory agencies, which are more likely to be reviewing, rather than writing, SIAs. It addresses two questions in particular: what is distinct about a ‘regulatory approach’ to SIA?, and what are the critical issues in SIA for regulators? A regulatory role was the primary function of SIA when it arose alongside environmental impact assessment (EIA) in the 1970s (Vanclay et al., 2015; Vanclay, 2020). While the functions and usefulness of SIA have now expanded across the project lifecycle – at least in theory although less so in practice – from pre-approval project planning to post-approval management, the regulatory function remains central. Yet the actual role of regulators themselves in SIA is not extensively documented, nor well understood. The author of this chapter is someone who has had a key role in developing and implementing regulatory procedures for SIA in a state government planning department in Australia.

A REGULATORY APPROACH TO SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT: PUTTING THE PUBLIC INTEREST FIRST

While specialist practitioners *research and prepare* SIA documents (such as community needs and values analyses, social impact scoping reports, SIA reports, and social impact management plans), regulators principally *review* those documents to determine their quality and acceptability and to assess the merits of proposed projects. This means the regulatory staff must be experienced, not only in SIA concepts, principles, and processes, but also in impartial, critical analysis. The analytical function is discussed in the next section. Firstly, we need to contextualise it within broader SIA practices by distinguishing a regulatory approach to SIA from other approaches.

Regulators Are People Too

In much contemporary business discourse, the terms ‘regulator’ and ‘regulation’ are often accompanied by disparaging terms such as ‘red tape’, ‘bureaucratic’, and ‘faceless’. The implication is that regulation – including regulation to manage social impacts of development – is burdensome and opaque. While this may be partly true, regulation is also essential in ensuring that decisions consider all relevant matters including the public interest. But who actually makes these decisions, and how? Vanclay et al. (2015, p. 91) defined a regulator as ‘a public authority or government agency responsible for exercising decision making and oversight over some area of human activity in a regulatory or supervisory capacity. In an SIA context, this may be the Department of Environment or the Department of Planning.’ Clearly, a regulatory ‘authority’ or ‘agency’ is a collective organisation, not an individual. Indeed, this organisational attribute should mean that development decisions are not made at the whim of individuals, such as politicians. Rather, decisions must follow highly codified regulations and processes that – at least theoretically – ensure that decisions demonstrate and reflect generally agreed principles such as procedural fairness, impartiality, and transparency. Yet, unless or until artificial intelligence can perform the task more effectively, the process of reaching those decisions – i.e., of applying regulations – is performed by humans with actual (and diverse) faces, human characteristics, and flaws. With humans come worldviews, values, assumptions, and multiple subjectivities, thwarting the idealistic view that decisions are completely objective and value-free. Compounding this human element, in the author’s experience, regulatory staff are almost certainly working with imperfect information, and under pressures of time and resources. Therefore, we must avoid the reductionist characterisation of regulatory staff as faceless automatons thoughtlessly and unreflexively applying routine procedures.

If regulatory processes are not purely objective, what can regulatory staff do to provide fair, effective, and consistent oversight of SIA? What perspectives can they bring to determine the acceptability of SIA reports and whether to recommend approval of a project development? SIA work in a regulatory environment typically exists within broader practices of environmental impact assessment (EIA), which itself sits within broader planning contexts, systems, and laws relating to the environment, land use, and public health, for example. In this context, regulatory review and decision-making need to serve the public interest, rather than private, corporate, political, or sectional interests. This implies that: projects should be approved and developed only if they are in the public interest; and that projects should be designed, developed, and managed so as to maximise public interest outcomes. Inevitably, this leads to the question: what is the ‘public interest’? More specifically, how do we apply the concept of the public interest in the process of doing SIA? Indeed, can we characterise a particular sub-practice that we might call ‘public interest SIA’?

What Is the Public Interest?

Acting in the public interest may well be ‘fundamental to a representative democratic system of government and to good public administration’ (Wheeler, 2016, p. 3), but it is poorly understood. The ‘public interest’ is a political and legal concept often used in conjunction with terms such as ‘common good’, ‘public good’, and ‘common interest’. Yet precisely defining the ‘public interest’ is notoriously problematic, ‘because it has intentionally evolved as ambiguous and mutable’ (Johnston, 2017, online). It is a matter of regulatory judgement in the particular

Table 11.1 *How to identify whether a public interest matter is at issue in SIA*

Question	Implication
Is this an issue that affects primarily the proponent’s economic interests?	It is probably <i>not</i> a public interest matter.
Is this an issue that affects primarily the proponent’s interests but also the economic interests of a few people in a similar situation (e.g., business owners hoping to supply the proponent)?	It is probably <i>not</i> a public interest matter, unless perhaps a significant change in community livelihoods is at stake.
Is this an issue that affects the proponent’s interests but which may have wider social implications?	It probably is a matter with public interest elements.
Is this an issue that does not affect the proponent’s interests but that has wider social implications?	It certainly is a public interest matter.

Source: Adapted from Ricketts (2012).

context at the particular time. It is also multifaceted, with decision-makers having to consider and evaluate the relative weight of various matters in determining where the public interest resides.

From a legal and democratic perspective, one way to understand public interest is by distinguishing it from its opposite or perhaps antithesis, e.g., the private and vested interests of proponents, developers, or political parties (Ricketts, 2012). Private interests are those of individuals or groups of individuals, whereas public interest extends to the community or to a group within the community, i.e., to matters of broader concern (Wheeler, 2016). This is not entirely satisfactory, however, because some people may be unaware of all the potential public and private interests relating to a proposed project through a lack of information. Therefore, applying the precautionary principle, where one or more community members have concerns about a project, a useful test of reasonableness may be to consider whether those concerns derive from a public or private interest matter.

The significance of this for regulators and SIA reviewers is that, unfortunately, many SIA reports make grand assertions about project benefits (and courageous claims about the likely effectiveness of mitigation measures) that, on closer inspection, may largely constitute private benefits to a few individuals, rather than public benefits. Adapting Ricketts (2012, pp. 13–14), various scenarios can help us identify public interest matters in SIA (see Table 11.1). Of course, this public/private dualism simplifies complex and overlapping interests, and some concerns may constitute both public and private interests. This complexity, and the idea that a planning decision might turn on the public interest, perhaps explains why people with competing views can simultaneously defend those views by citing public interest concerns. For example, a proponent may assert that their project supports the public interest because it will create jobs, while a local community group may argue that it is not in the public interest because of risks to people’s safety, health, livelihoods, or community, and/or because the jobs will be few, or short-term, or beneficial only to those migrating from elsewhere and insufficient to offset other concerns.

Apparently incommensurate views can exist simultaneously simply because they reflect different values, priorities, and interests, rather than objective assessments of public interest concerns. Few would argue categorically that neither job creation nor the avoidance of harm to people are public interest matters. However, proponents, governments, and industry have greater power than local community groups to frame the *meaning* of the public interest –

whether via access to decision-makers, lobbying, or discursive influence – and to support their framing with apparently objective, technocratic arguments (Kennedy, 2017, p. 174).

The regulator's and reviewer's task, therefore, is critical analysis. They must scrutinise the evidence, and consider and weigh the relative merits of these matters using the best information available (including local, place-based, and Indigenous knowledge) and careful judgement: 'Balancing the benefits and costs of the Project is, in the end, a qualitative and not quantitative exercise ... a process of intuitive synthesis' (Gloucester Resources Limited v Minister for Planning [2019] NSWLEC 7 at 687). Furthermore, as Preston (2014) noted, decision-making authorities (and proponents) need to consider the gap that typically exists between legal requirements and societal expectations, sometimes described as building a 'social licence' above and beyond compliance.

This complexity means that the regulatory task is not simply to calculate net social benefit or loss, nor to assess whether a likely impact exceeds a regulatory threshold, as may be the case with noise, groundwater, biodiversity, or other environmental and biophysical impacts. As Wheeler (2016) identified, public interest is not only about the *outcome* but also about: inputs (what is considered); process (procedures and practices); and the approach (principles and timeframes) and conduct (ethics) of the decision-maker.

In addition to assessing the likely impacts based on the best evidence available, therefore, regulators and reviewers must focus on the governance and ethics of the *process, procedure, and methods* that underlie an SIA and its predicted social outcomes, impacts, and mitigation and management measures. Indeed, where there is considerable uncertainty regarding the likely impacts (e.g., in a relatively new industry), scrutinising the process becomes especially important. Wheeler (2006) proposed eight elements of this process component that constitute the public interest:

- complying with applicable law (both its letter *and spirit*);
- carrying out functions fairly and impartially;
- complying with the principles of procedural fairness/natural justice;
- acting reasonably;
- ensuring accountability and transparency;
- exposing corrupt conduct or serious maladministration;
- avoiding or properly managing private interests conflicting with official duties; and
- acting apolitically in the performance of official functions.

So, what does this multidimensional conceptualisation of public interest mean for SIA? Table 11.2 identifies some distinguishing characteristics of SIA that serves the public interest versus serving private or vested interests. This rather binary representation raises a further question – can consultant practitioners working for a private or vested interest practise SIA that serves the public interest, thereby performing a quasi-regulatory function? Experience suggests that many practitioners are genuinely striving for the best social wellbeing outcomes, sometimes with the support of their clients and sometimes without it, leading to frequent tensions, compromises, and negotiations. Indeed, many if not most SIA practitioners choose their vocation based on personal values of wanting to 'make a difference', only to find their aspirations thwarted by various constraints.

Equally, we cannot assume that regulatory review officers inevitably support the public interest. Compromising situations may arise if corrupting practices or structures disempower them from promoting the public interest, or if they are professionally 'immersed' in industry

Table 11.2 *Distinguishing public interest SIA*

Questions to consider	Private or vested interest SIA	Public interest SIA
Who usually commissions and pays for the SIA work?	Business owners, government corporations, non-governmental organisations	Public administration agencies (e.g., planning authorities, land and environment courts, public health agencies) Independent (usually non-profit) agencies, organisations, or groups
Who usually undertakes the SIA work?	Consultant practitioners or internal officers	Regulatory review officers, academics, or independent practitioners
What is the overarching objective of the SIA work?	To support business, political, or sectional interests (which may or may not be socially beneficial)	To undertake impartial assessment and management of social impacts To achieve change or development consistent with social wellbeing

Source: The author.

discourse with little direct exposure to community experiences. Regulators may unwittingly succumb to ‘state capture’ by sectional interests (Hellman et al., 2000), also known as ‘regulatory capture’, where regulatory officers prioritise industry interests over wider public concerns. A warning sign of potential capture is the existence of a ‘revolving door’ of staff between regulators and industry (Kay, 2022). The two characterisations in Table 11.2, therefore, are perhaps better seen as archetypes from which variations in practice may eventuate. While these archetypes help us to distinguish the characteristics of public interest SIA, distinctions may be murkier in practice. Nevertheless, applying these attributes of public interest SIA, we can consider some practical tasks and critical issues when reviewing SIA.

INAPPROPRIATE PRESSURE ON SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONERS

The rest of the chapter considers the critical issues that arise for SIA in a regulatory context. It identifies some key aspects of SIA processes and methods to scrutinise when reviewing documents and determining the merits of projects, programmes, or other social change processes. While regulators and reviewers are the primary audience here, these issues may be insightful also for practitioners who are seeking to practise SIA in the public interest. More generally, the issues outlined here may assist all practitioners seeking to practise high-quality SIA in accordance with established ethical research practice (Vanclay et al., 2013) and SIA principles (e.g., Vanclay, 2003), in particular rigour, inclusiveness, equity, and impartiality.

According to leading guidance and principles, SIA documents should be impartial, i.e., literally ‘assessments’ of the likely social impacts of a project either proceeding or not proceeding, based on available evidence from primary and secondary data, reflecting multiple perspectives including social science research, local, place-based community views and First Nations’ perspectives where relevant. On this basis, we perhaps could be confident of the findings and recommendations in determining whether a project is in the public interest or not. Indeed, proponents with a strong ethical framework will enable and encourage their SIA consultants to practise their craft independent of undue influence.

Table 11.3 Identifying and responding to pro-development bias in SIA documents

Type of pressure	Nature of pressure
Direct	Proponents may directly influence, or selectively edit, documents before submitting them to regulators. In some cases, they may write SIA documents themselves, even though they may lack the specialist skills. They may also limit the scope, or restrict access to the community (Smyth, 2021).
Indirect	Proponents may exert pressure on practitioners to delete, edit, or add certain content, and/or to modify their methodology.
Discursive	Practitioners may self-regulate their behaviour – and their reports – in response to perceived or implied pressure.

Source: The author.

Often, however, various factors or pressures compromise this impartiality ideal. These pressures may be direct or indirect, or perhaps discursive (see Table 11.3). Discursive pressure reflects implicit assumptions and behaviours perpetuated through mutually constructed language and practice (Ijabadeniyi & Vanclay, 2020). The objective of applying pressure, from a proponent's point of view, is to portray the project more favourably than might be the case through genuinely impartial assessment. Practitioners, meanwhile, may be trying to act impartially, but could fear loss of future work. As a result, regulators, reviewers, and practitioners all need to be wary of bias.

So how do we recognise the presence of these pressures? For all three types of pressure, a lack of impartiality, or pro-development bias, may be evident through an assertive – rather than reflexive – tone that permeates the document (Parsons & Luke, 2021). At its most obvious, this manifests as a sales pitch for the project, with a series of unsubstantiated assertions about the benefits that will ensue should the project proceed. More commonly and subtly, it manifests as omissions, selective use of data, misrepresented data, or other methodological errors, that either intentionally or perhaps unintentionally (in the case of discursive pressure) support a preferred outcome. These issues, which are detailed below, are triggers to question the SIA's claims and/or to seek further information. Regardless of the nature of the pressure, regulators have various response options. Project-specific and/or general responses may be used, depending on the situation.

Project-specific measures include:

- commission an independent peer review;
- require that a revised SIA be undertaken by an independent third party, with appropriate provisions in place to ensure impartiality;
- require the SIA practitioner to declare that: no information is false or misleading; the content reflects their own professional views and analysis; they have not experienced unreasonable pressure to change any content.

General measures include:

- provide support to practitioners through legislation, regulation, and guidance that stipulates the requirement for impartiality and methodological rigour;
- communicate unequivocally to proponents that the regulator must be able to rely upon the information in SIA documents in decision-making;
- develop regulatory reforms to support impartial and independent practice;

- require practitioners to subscribe to effective certification schemes and to demonstrate ongoing professional learning and development.

CRITICAL ISSUES AND QUESTIONS TO ASK IN RELATION TO SIA IN A REGULATORY CONTEXT

below is a list of questions to ask and/or issues for regulators to consider when reviewing SIA processes and documents. The list identifies key issues to consider, organised according to typical elements in SIA. They are partly based on the extensive review criteria in Vanclay et al. (2015, pp. 66–69), and partly on my personal experience working in a regulatory environment.

Has the Applicant Applied the Principles?

SIA has well-established principles and guidance (Vanclay, 2003; Vanclay et al., 2015) to underpin practice, which are often articulated at a jurisdictional level, and therefore regulators and reviewers should expect practitioners to follow and apply them. To check whether an SIA has been prepared in accordance with relevant principles, a first step might be to identify whether it acknowledges the principles and explains explicitly how they have been applied. Experience suggests that the most commonly overlooked or ignored principles are the precautionary, impartiality, and inclusivity principles. Of course, simply claiming that certain principles have been applied – for example via a table or checklist – is no guarantee of actual application. Indeed, a ‘checklist’ approach may oversimplify complex social processes and divergent community experiences, or simply hoodwink the reviewer into assuming that a rigorous approach has been undertaken.

The second step is to apply careful, informed judgement to discern and evaluate whether relevant principles have indeed been applied adequately throughout the SIA process. This requires a good understanding of the principles. For example, to consider whether the SIA is inclusive, consider what measures and methods were applied to include the interests and concerns of vulnerable and marginalised groups. Similarly, for a lifecycle approach, does the SIA consider people’s historical experiences with development and change right through to how they will sustain themselves and their community after the project ceases operations? Furthermore, is the SIA impartial or is there evidence or reasonable suspicion of bias? Was all information shared transparently and inclusively with affected and interested people, or was potentially important information withheld or people overlooked? Are proportionate and adaptive measures proposed to manage change and respond to incidents and unanticipated impacts over time? Where there is considerable uncertainty or highly divergent views regarding likely social impacts, does the SIA take a precautionary approach to protect people from serious harm?

Many SIA practitioners are members of professional associations, which are likely to have working principles and codes of ethics and/or conduct. These typically include obligations to provide impartial and unbiased advice, to distinguish between fact and opinion, to avoid misrepresentation, and to avoid or manage conflicts of interest.

Does the Lead Author Have Appropriate Skills, Qualifications, and/or Experience?

SIA requires specialist skills in the social sciences, social research methodologies, and complementary activities such as community engagement. This is because SIA requires application of the scientific method, which entails expertise in ‘observing, analysing and interpreting research data’ (Munday, 2020, p. 48). Many SIAs rely exclusively or disproportionately on demographic data and (often superficial) consultation outputs.

Where research for the SIA involves people (e.g., undertaking interviews), practitioners are expected to follow relevant ethical considerations, to ensure that research is conducted in a responsible, safe, secure, transparent, confidential, impartial, respectful, fair, and just manner (Vanclay et al., 2013). Depending on the context, a practitioner may also need specialist experience and knowledge in certain aspects of SIA, such as resettlement, gender, human rights, First Nations cultures, or public health.

When reviewing an SIA report, one should look for documentary evidence of relevant skills, qualifications and/or experience for the project concerned and its social context. For complex projects, SIA will require a team of practitioners, who should all be identified and their experience described in the report. Within the social sciences, appropriate disciplinary backgrounds include anthropology, psychology, human geography, and sociology. However, the conceptual breadth of SIA means that a cross-disciplinary background, combined with extensive professional training, is beneficial. Practitioners may also need understanding of environmental sciences, economics, and/or public health in order to interpret data from other studies and derive social implications.

The lead author of the SIA should also provide a signed declaration certifying that the assessment does not contain false or misleading information. While the declaration itself is no guarantee of quality or impartiality, it can provide practitioners with greater leverage with their clients to practise SIA with professional integrity, impartiality, and independence, especially in the face of the pressures described above.

Did the Community Engagement Process Adequately Inform the SIA?

In SIA, meaningful community engagement is essential to inform the SIA’s findings (Munday, 2020; see Chapter 20). While community engagement per se does not constitute research, it performs a primary research function in SIA, complementing secondary (desktop) research. A key aspect of community engagement in SIA is to use local knowledge and Indigenous knowledge appropriately. Host communities hold ‘local knowledge’ on the area, its histories, and its features, and on how they expect to experience the project. Meanwhile, First Nations people hold Indigenous knowledge that is holistic and relational, and that is inextricably connected with people, culture, land, nature, and spirituality, in contrast to the tendency of Western science to compartmentalise knowledge (Page & Memmott, 2021). The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2004), for example, recognises the central role of traditional knowledge in conservation and biodiversity. Engaging with Indigenous knowledge therefore requires ‘decolonising methodologies’ (Smith, 1999) that respect these interconnections and cultural interpretations. Reflecting this methodological orientation, Canada’s Indigenous Knowledge Policy Framework requires reviews of impact assessments to ‘meaningfully consider Indigenous Knowledge’ wherever it is provided (Government of Canada, 2022).

Table 11.4 Distinguishing meaningful from superficial community engagement

Attribute	Meaningful and effective community engagement	Superficial community engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● representative ● diverse 	Diverse and dissenting community voices, values, concerns, and aspirations are directly and fairly represented in the SIA.	Only some/dominant voices are evident in the SIA.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● inclusive ● participatory ● equitable 	Community engagement activities include diverse methods and participatory techniques to ensure inclusivity, especially to support equitable access for vulnerable and marginalised groups.	Only one or two engagement techniques practised (e.g., a survey). Engagement skewed towards ‘informing’ and ‘consulting’. No specific effort to include vulnerable and marginalised groups.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● culturally responsive ● tailored 	Engagement design and methods are culturally responsive and respectful, creatively tailored to encourage each group to participate in identifying impacts and responses to them.	Engagement methods privilege the dominant cultural group(s). Engagement methods are universal, ‘one-size-fits-all’.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● dialogic ● community-centred 	Participants experience the process of engagement as a procedurally fair, equal exchange of views – a meaningful conversation where their input can actively influence or determine project decisions.	Participants feel that their views will not be listened to or make any difference.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● empowering 	The process or experience of engagement itself strengthens the community’s cohesion and people’s capacity to participate in decision-making, and supports self-determination.	The process of engagement leaves the community more divided, disillusioned, and powerless than before.

Source: The author.

Meaningful engagement for SIA is a community-centred dialogue that gleans insights and data that help in understanding people’s perceptions of the project and its context. Regulators and reviewers need to be able to discern the attributes that distinguish meaningful engagement from superficial engagement (see Table 11.4), because the latter leads to unreliable or incomplete data.

Of course, community engagement can be challenging, especially if communities feel that the demand on their resources (e.g., time, money, knowledge, emotions) is excessive, or if they feel that their participation will make no difference to the outcome. Nevertheless, the onus is on the proponent to exercise care, due diligence, discretion, and respect in all communication activities. If the proponent claims that people were unresponsive or reluctant to participate, ask why that was. Has the proponent investigated alternative methods, times, or locations to undertake engagement?

In SIA, community engagement (or public participation) is commonly misapplied as a substitute for, rather than complementing, good social research (Freudenburg & Olsen, 1983). Substitution may be evident when the SIA includes plentiful discussion of community engagement (or merely ‘consultation’) without methodologically integrating this into the broader social-scientific task of applying available social research findings.

Does the SIA Baseline Study Clearly Identify Current Social Data, Trends, Concerns, and Aspirations?

The purpose of a social baseline is to document the social context before any changes induced by the project (Vanclay et al., 2015, p. 74). When reviewing the social baseline study, we are

looking for a clear picture of the relevant characteristics of the affected communities (e.g., health, livelihoods, cultural practices, social infrastructure). Does the SIA use relevant social indicators for the locality and the region, disaggregated to highlight inequalities and unevenness? Does the SIA identify people's values, concerns, and aspirations with respect to these characteristics?

If the project will affect multiple communities or localities, their social and cultural contexts should be documented distinctly. This provides a comparison point or benchmark against which to assess potential impacts and their significance. Since communities are always changing in some way, the baseline should also document the social trends that characterise this change. This should include a history of the locality/ies, including First Nations peoples' history where relevant, and identify the various stakeholder groups.

Is the Social Baseline Study Material, Complete, and Diverse?

The social baseline should focus on 'materiality', i.e., what matters most to people. It should not waste time and space on peripheral data or commentary. For example, does the socio-demographic data help us to understand the community's character, composition, values, and diversity, or is it a 'data dump' offering sparse insight? Similarly, does the study provide a complete picture of the area, or does it omit, overlook, or downplay anything that might be important?

Regulators and reviewers should also check that the social baseline does not present a homogenised impression of the community. Rather, it should identify difference and diversity in lived experience, interests, values, concerns, and aspirations across the community. There may be a 'majority' or dominant experience or view, but the SIA should report difference, divergence, and dissent. Nevertheless, it should clearly focus on those likely to be most significantly impacted – especially if they are vulnerable or marginalised – because their experiences and views will carry greater weight when evaluating the merits of the project. Often, people living closest to a development experience the most adverse impacts, yet they can be rendered 'invisible' – especially in remote areas that receive few visitors – unless effort is made to focus on their specific experiences (Bainton et al., 2020). We need to understand these contextual community vulnerabilities to be confident that the project will not exacerbate them.

Is the Social Baseline Study Methodologically Sound?

Social data and insights are thematically wide-ranging, requiring diverse research methods. Some aspects of the social baseline, such as community composition and epidemiological health data, can be represented quantitatively. Others, such as culture, community cohesion, way of life, and sense of place, are likely to be better informed and represented by qualitative research and insights. A baseline study needs both qualitative and quantitative information. For example, changes to community cohesion can be represented quantitatively by the number of families migrating to/from the area, by the opening/closure of services, and by changes to the distribution of social infrastructure, and qualitatively by documenting people's views of these changes. A common framework for integrating quantitative and qualitative data is the 'community capitals', which can identify areas of resilience and vulnerability (e.g., Emery & Flora, 2006).

Qualitative research for the social baseline requires specific skills and training. When reviewing qualitative research in an SIA, consider the following:

- Has any secondary qualitative research been peer reviewed, or appeared in a peer-reviewed journal?
- Was the selection of qualitative methods (e.g., interviews, focus groups, workshops) appropriate for the research objective?
- Were participants selected carefully and inclusively to avoid bias and ensure diversity?
- Does the report provide direct quotes that accurately and fairly illustrate competing views?
- Did the practitioner ask relevant and non-leading questions?
- Were workshops independently facilitated?
- What provisions were made to apply research ethics and cultural protocols?
- Is there a clear connection between the analysis and the findings?

Where quantitative measures are used to indicate something social, ask whether they really measure what they claim to measure (in social research, this is called ‘validity’). For example, ‘incidence of volunteering’ is sometimes used to indicate community cohesion, or social capital, because it signifies that people are connected to their community. In truth, it may partly indicate this, but it does not tell us the whole story, so we would need more indicators plus some qualitative analysis. The social baseline should also identify all data sources, and identify any limitations and assumptions.

Note that we cannot expect SIA practitioners to be analytically ‘objective’. We all have our own subjective values, opinions, preferences, and worldviews, constructed and continually evolving through experience. However, we should expect the social baseline to apply the scientific method, not to be biased by a practitioner’s pre-existing views, and to demonstrate this by fairly representing all relevant groups in the community.

Is the Prediction of Impacts Credible?

For each identified social impact, the SIA should provide all information necessary to enable impartial assessment of the risk (for negative impacts) or benefit (for positive impacts) for people. A key task, therefore, is to consider whether the prediction and analysis contain all the information needed to evaluate likely significance. There should be a clear, coherent logic connecting the characteristics of each impact – from specifying the nature of what will change, to the community values that the change affects, to whom will be affected, to significance ratings of likelihood and consequence/magnitude. This will inform whether the project has merit and supports the public interest.

If an SIA simply lists a number of predicted social impacts, without specifying what changes will produce them, what community values they will affect, or precisely whom within the community they will affect, then it is incomplete. This is well documented in existing guidance. Table 11.5 reorients these details from a regulatory perspective, identifying what to look for when *reviewing* an SIA. For each characteristic, look for evidence to substantiate the information. Reviewers should refer to these sources to check whether the impact predictions are reasonable, based on the available evidence. If the evidence does not support the prediction, more information may be required, or the SIA may not be acceptable.

Table 11.5 Details and evidence needed to evaluate credibility of social impact predictions

Characteristic	Details needed to enable assessment	Appropriate sources of evidence
Nature of change	What will change, as a result of the project, to produce a social impact (e.g., influx of population, more heavy road traffic, new buildings and infrastructure, alteration of landforms)?	Project description, maps of area, current and forecasted demographics, health, and social infrastructure trends. Evidence, preferably peer-reviewed, from comparable projects/ experiences.
Matters/values	What things that people value may be affected by the project-induced change (e.g., clean air and water, character of community, sense of safety)?	Community engagement and primary research insights. Community visioning outcomes.
People	Who may be affected, directly or indirectly? Are there any vulnerable groups who may be disproportionately affected?	Stakeholder mapping.
Likelihood	How likely is the impact to occur (e.g., unlikely, possible, likely, almost certain)?	Project description, including maps of area.
Consequence/magnitude	extent	Which location(s) is/are affected (e.g., near neighbours, local, regional)?
	duration	Will the impact be time-limited (e.g., construction, operation) or permanent?
	severity or scale	What is the likely scale or level of change (e.g., mild, moderate, severe)?
	sensitivity or importance	How sensitive/vulnerable (or adaptable/resilient) are people to the impact, or (for positive impacts) how important is it to them? This might depend on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the value they attach to the matter; – whether it is rare/unique or replaceable; – the extent to which it is tied to their identity; and – their capacity to cope with or adapt to change.
level of concern / interest	How concerned/interested are people? (Sometimes, concerns may be disproportionate to findings from technical assessments of likelihood, duration, and/or severity. Concern or fear itself can lead to significant impacts, e.g., psychological distress.)	Insights from community during engagement activities. Discussions with project managers. Experiences from comparable projects. Community workshops, interviews, or surveys. Documented experiences from comparable projects in the area. Community engagement insights. Social media discussions.

Source: The author.

What Are the Common Omissions?

A critical task when reviewing SIAs is to detect omissions or absences. Omitting significant impacts, people, or data disregards the precautionary principle and contravenes the public interest because decisions will be based on incomplete information. But how do you notice

something that isn't there? Experience suggests that reviewers should be alert to the following common omissions:

- Analysis of the distributive equity of impacts, social inequalities, spatial segregation, and their links with social wellbeing and public health outcomes (e.g., Marmot et al., 2020; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2012).
- Social-scale impacts – for example, assessing impacts of noise and dust on individual 'receptors' only, without also considering community and public health, community wellbeing, and community cohesion.
- Impacts on vulnerable and marginalised groups and how they may be disproportionately or differently affected. Such groups are often dismissed as 'hard to reach', placing the burden of inclusion on the people themselves. Depending on project context, those who are more likely to be vulnerable are: First Nations peoples; women; isolated elderly people; children and young people; single-parent households; those on very low incomes; those living with disabilities or poor health; ethnic minorities, migrants, those who are culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) or those from non-majority speaking backgrounds; those experiencing homelessness or insecure housing; those living outside metropolitan areas; those who are unable or unwilling to express or represent themselves and their needs; and future generations.
- Intangible values associated with the landscape and its features; e.g., a sense of connection or place attachment that people experience towards a river, a landform, a building, or a community (Albrecht, 2005; Askland, 2018).
- The basis for claims of social benefit, in particular claims about jobs created.
- Social dimensions (not just economic) of jobs and business opportunities (e.g., improved livelihoods, community resilience, pressure on housing availability and affordability, fears for safety especially for women, loss/change of community character).
- Gendered social impacts – how different genders might experience the project differently, in particular whether women may become further marginalised or endangered, and whether intersections of gender and other dimensions of diversity and identity amplify or multiply the significance of impacts.
- Impacts on decision-making systems – notably, whether project-affected people will experience procedural fairness and justice and can influence decisions that affect them (Munday, 2020).
- Impacts over time – in particular, how communities have experienced development-induced change historically, and how they will adapt, evolve, and sustain themselves following project closure, consistent with a lifecycle approach.
- Cumulative social impacts, including how people experience the combined effects of a single project.

Selective, Misleading, or Misrepresented Data

Data – especially quantitative data – have tremendous power to convey an 'illusion of objectivity' (Parsons, 2019), potentially masking ideological choices and assumptions (e.g., that mining jobs are inherently and universally beneficial for First Nations people), and misrepresent-

senting the project's likely impacts. We should always question the data to determine whether it presents an unbiased analysis of likely social impacts. Common distortions include:

- Raw numbers that create a different impression of impact significance compared to percentages or rates.
- Reported statistics (e.g., crime rates, domestic violence) that obscure a social trend by ignoring non-reported incidents.
- Survey findings influenced by inappropriate sampling strategies, use of leading questions, or misleading reporting of data (e.g., stating only that 35 per cent of respondents did not object to a proposal, and neglecting to report that 35 per cent did object, 30 per cent were neutral, and that actual respondents constituted only 10 per cent of the local population.
- Selective evidence or referencing to support a claim, without considering reasonable counter-evidence.
- The boundaries of the 'social area of influence' being defined too narrowly. This produces data that misrepresents the project's impacts, because it excludes people and omits impacts.
- Subsuming or diluting differences and vulnerabilities within an 'average' level of impact significance.
- 'Double-counting' by presenting the cost of mitigation measures (e.g., financial support for local health services to mitigate impacts on local air quality) as also a financial social benefit – this provides an inflated impression of net impact.

To support the public interest, an SIA should specify exactly where people may experience impacts, identify nuance and difference in the data within this area, and provide tailored data for places and people experiencing the most significant impacts.

Are There Any Unsubstantiated Claims?

Many development projects genuinely bring social benefits. The SIA should provide evidence to substantiate any claims of such benefits. However, claims are often unsubstantiated and may need interrogation. Most commonly, claims follow a commonly accepted assumption; for example, that a large development will deliver social benefits by virtue of creating employment and business opportunities. In this example, questions the regulator could ask include:

- Is the methodology for modelling economic impacts disclosed, reasonable, and reliable?
- Does the modelling consider factors such as substitution effects (displacing existing jobs), automation trends, and changes in market demands?
- What effects will the jobs have on local small businesses that might not be able to compete on wages?
- How will an increase in economic opportunities affect social indicators, such as perceived sense of belonging, levels of community cohesion, crime rates, and (perceptions of) safety?
- Will the economic opportunities be distributed in ways that (dis)advantage different social groups, e.g., men/women, First Nations/non-First Nations people, local/non-local people?

Claims and assertions are also often made about adverse social impacts, particularly to present them as unavoidable, or a price worth paying for the project's (claimed) benefits. For example, an SIA might claim that increasing entertainment and hospitality options in an urban area will enhance social inclusion, cultural expression, and local character. These impacts may well be

attainable, but, without analysis and evidence (and robust design measures to secure them), they are unsubstantiated claims. In general, regulators should be alert to broad, sweeping statements that frame contestable and complex social phenomena as incontrovertible truths.

Are the Mitigation and Enhancement Arrangements Effective?

Such is the pace and normalisation of industrial development today, that it is sometimes easy to be seduced by its narrative of inevitability and progress, and to accept disproportionate or ineffective mitigation of its adverse impacts as ‘a price worth paying’ for that progress. Yet justice in decision-making – which concerns fairness of both outcomes and processes (Kennedy, 2017) – demands that regulators carefully consider whether proposed mitigation and enhancement measures are reasonable and acceptable.

A relatively simple framework for interrogating each proposed mitigation or enhancement measure is to pose the following questions (see Ziller, 2021):

- Does it *directly address the impact*? (If not, it may be a trade-off or offset rather than mitigation, and should be evaluated as a distinct impact and weighed alongside other impacts in regulatory decision-making.)
- Is it a *tangible* commitment (e.g., to incorporate agreed First Nations design elements into the development), or is it a vague assurance or intention (e.g., a proposal to develop a plan/strategy, to consider training opportunities, or to undertake further research before proposing a response)?
- Is it likely to be *durably effective* (i.e., will it actually mitigate/enhance the impact for the duration of people experiencing it – and is there evidence to support this being a likely outcome – or is it merely a symbolic gesture, e.g., an undertaking to attend community meetings)?
- Is it *deliverable by the proponent*, or does its realisation rely on a third party (e.g., a local or provincial authority or another organisation)?

The regulator or reviewer should also consider the mitigation hierarchy, questioning whether all efforts have been made firstly to avoid adverse impacts, secondly to minimise them (e.g., by reducing operating hours), and thirdly to offset or compensate (Munday, 2020).

Are the Monitoring and Management Arrangements Appropriate?

Just as social impacts can occur before a project starts, particularly if rumours feed social division or expectations, so a project can continue to have social impacts that evolve over time and leave a legacy of additional social impacts, positive and negative. Regulators and reviewers need to consider whether an effective framework for monitoring and managing social impacts, and provisions for implementing it, are in place. To evaluate a proposed framework, reviewers might identify whether it includes the following, depending on scale:

- meaningful indicators, measures, and targets for evaluating social performance;
- detailed mechanisms for monitoring predicted impacts;
- opportunities for local and First Nations communities to participate in monitoring;
- a process for responding to unanticipated impacts;
- clear accountabilities for monitoring and managing social impacts;

- a responsive grievance and remedy system;
- provisions for independent oversight and regular review (e.g., via a ‘Social Adviser’);
- public reporting commitments;
- an adequate, externally managed fund to address any legacy impacts on communities.

In addition, note that any framework that depends on the proponent to design and implement it is vulnerable to the pressures identified in Table 11.3. A better approach is one where a properly resourced regulatory agency has some meaningful role in monitoring and reviewing social impacts and enforcing compliance with conditions of development consent. Finally, in the light of significant human disasters such as the Ok Tedi disaster (see Chapter 6) and the Brumadinho tailings dam failure (Hopkins & Kemp, 2021), proponents need to know that breaches of social impact conditions will be subject to proportionate penalties, in the interests of avoiding or remediating harm to people.

Are the Project’s Social Impacts in the Public Interest?

Ultimately, the regulator must consider and compare the likely social costs and benefits of a project. Assuming they have all relevant social impact information in front of them, and assuming environmental and other impacts are acceptable and manageable, notwithstanding some inevitable uncertainties, a regulator may conclude that a project is in the public interest if it satisfies three conditions:

- it will deliver net social benefit;
- it will not exacerbate social inequalities; and
- it will not leave any vulnerable or marginalised people worse off.

There are numerous ways in which projects might achieve all three conditions through thoughtful project design. For example, a public/social housing project might incorporate solar power to help reduce the energy costs for traditionally poor households (Roberts et al., 2021). A transport infrastructure project might include measures that enhance accessibility to economic, cultural, and social activities for socially excluded people (Stanley & Stanley, 2022). A mining project, equally, might tackle systemic local disadvantage by training and employing local people to perform skilled work conventionally assumed to need imported labour, or it might integrate health, wellbeing, livelihood, and/or cultural co-benefits for First Nations peoples in project management (Barber & Jackson, 2017).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed SIA from a regulatory and reviewers’ perspective. It has highlighted the role of the public interest in regulatory approaches to SIA. Indeed, there may be value in considering this perspective as a distinct form of SIA practice called ‘public interest SIA’, in which integrity, impartiality, and independence are paramount. To that extent, this chapter should assist not only regulatory reviewers but also those practitioners who are seeking to practise SIA in the public interest, for example, consultants acting as independent peer-reviewers, or those explicitly adopting an independent approach that resists private and vested interests.

Direct, indirect, and discursive pressures may act upon SIA practitioners, compromising their impartiality, and making it difficult for regulators and reviewers to rely upon the SIA's findings and recommendations in determining whether a project is in the public interest or not. Various response options are possible to manage these pressures, for example, seeking an independent peer review, requiring further assessment, instituting a regulatory requirement for impartiality, and/or supporting practitioner certification.

When reviewing an SIA, there are various issues to consider. Firstly, the reviewer should evaluate whether the lead author has the appropriate skills, qualifications, and/or experience, whether they have applied well-established principles to the SIA process and methodology, and whether community engagement outcomes have adequately informed the SIA. Secondly, they should evaluate whether the social baseline: identifies current social data, trends, concerns, and aspirations; is material, complete, and diverse (not homogenised); and is methodologically sound, integrating quantitative and qualitative data using appropriate social science methods. Thirdly, they should assess whether the prediction and analysis provide all information necessary to enable impartial assessment of impacts, both positive and negative. There should be a logical, coherent narrative connecting the project-induced change with identification of who will be affected, in what way(s), and how significantly. Reviewers should also check for common errors and omissions. Fourthly, reviewers should assess whether each proposed mitigation and enhancement measure directly addresses the impact, is a tangible commitment, is likely to be durably effective, and is deliverable by the proponent. Finally, they should consider whether the monitoring and management framework is adequate, proportionate, and likely to be effectively implemented.

If not satisfied that the SIA provides a rigorous, impartial, and inclusive analysis of a project's likely social impacts, the regulator can request further information, a peer review, and/or additional targeted research. They should also consider relevant external information, such as submissions from affected and interested people, and from experts. Regulatory systems should enable submissions in different forms, for example verbal and visual as well as written, to support consideration of local knowledge and Indigenous knowledge. Regulators must then determine whether the project is in the public interest, and whether any remaining social impacts can be adequately addressed through adaptive management. Perhaps the role of the regulator in SIA, or the objective of 'public interest SIA', can be summarised by posing two deceptively simple questions of an SIA: is it true?, and, is it fair and equitable?

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PART IV

SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF THE PROJECT CYCLE

12. Application of social impact assessment in planning a project: from concept to approvals

C. Nicholas Taylor and Mike Mackay

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the application of social impact assessment (SIA) at the early stages of the project lifecycle. These early stages of project planning are combined to provide guidance on the application of SIA in the development of a proposed project from concept through to formal approvals. The next two chapters in this book continue the discussion as they take readers through the construction stage (Chapter 13) and then to the operation and closure of projects (Chapter 14). The three chapters together comprise Part IV of this *Handbook*. They explain how SIAs build information about social impacts throughout the project lifecycle and apply this information to improve social outcomes and enhance the wellbeing of people and communities. In this chapter, we consider SIA in the planning of projects from project identification to project formulation, feasibility, design and approval. These early phases of projects benefit from SIA in terms of the advantages of predicting social impacts early on and the ability to enhance the social outcomes that are likely to arise from the project.

SIA is generally considered as being ‘the processes of analysing, monitoring and managing the intended and unintended social consequences, both positive and negative, of planned interventions (policies, programs, plans, projects) and any social change processes invoked by those interventions’ (Vanclay et al., 2015, p. 1). Although SIA can be a regulatory tool and is applied in numerous jurisdictions internationally (Taylor & Burdge, 2004; see Chapter 2), it should also be used in project management regardless of whether it is required by regulation. Unfortunately, many mistakes are made when SIA is applied late in project planning, which can often be as late as the point of obtaining project approvals (of technical, financial or environmental aspects). A proactive approach promotes a socially driven process of development that starts with project identification. The approach advanced in this chapter is that SIA should: build information about the management of social impacts from the start of a project; incorporate methods to avoid, reduce, mitigate and remedy negative social impacts; and include ways to enhance the social benefits for affected people (NSW, 2022).

The key points to consider in applying SIA to project planning are that:

1. SIA is most effective when applied early in project development, fully integrated into the project feasibility, design and planning stages, and done in a manner consistent with the guidance document of the International Association for Impact Assessment (Vanclay et al., 2015).
2. The management of social impacts should occur throughout the whole project lifecycle, from project planning to construction and operation. Positive community outcomes will result when projects pay attention to the proactive mitigation and management of impacts (NSW, 2022).

3. All other types of impacts (physical, biological, economic, cultural, health, etc.) and attempts at their mitigation also potentially have social consequences, therefore SIAs must be integrated with other assessments, technical investigations and feasibility analyses of projects. SIA can assist with the move from a siloed approach to impact assessment to more systemic integration (Ehrlich, 2022) by considering the social consequences of all types of impacts.
4. There is widespread agreement amongst practitioners that SIA should include the active participation of all interested and affected people and communities throughout the process, with an evident trend towards approaches that emphasise collaboration, empowerment and community-based assessments (Bice, 2020; see Chapter 10).

This chapter is based on the experiences of the authors in SIAs for projects across several sectors, including transport projects (e.g., highways, bicycle trails), oil and gas infrastructure (e.g., on-shore processing facilities), hydro-electricity, water infrastructure (including urban waste water and rural irrigation), shopping malls, tourism and casinos, industrial plants and parks, urban renewal and heritage projects, and new housing areas. Our primary experience is with projects in our home country of Aotearoa New Zealand, but is also international, including development assistance projects. We draw on our experience in research into what drives thriving regions and communities and leads to positive community outcomes and social wellbeing from economic development. We also draw on international experiences of ourselves and others, as well as available guidelines and frameworks (Esteves et al., 2012; Vanclay et al., 2015; Smyth & Vanclay, 2017; Munday, 2020; NSW, 2022).

THE NATURE OF SOCIAL IMPACTS

A social impact can be described as any planned or unplanned change to people's lives that arises from planned human actions or unplanned events (Vanclay, 2002, 2003; Esteves et al., 2012). Broadly, SIA for a project focuses on changes to the social wellbeing of people and communities. An understanding of the potential effects of a proposed project on social wellbeing is required by legislation in many countries, such as Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Canada and others, and is expected by all multilateral agencies, for example the World Bank (through its Environmental and Social Framework) and the United Nations (through the Sustainable Development Goals) (Vanclay & Hanna, 2019). Smyth and Vanclay (2017) considered wellbeing to include the basic needs of food and shelter, mental and physical health, livelihoods, being connected socially, and life satisfaction. Their detailed framework provides many indicators that an SIA assessor might use to determine the collective effect on wellbeing, depending on the social and environmental context of the project.

Social impacts should be considered from the very beginning of project planning, and be anticipated and managed during project planning and design. Thus, before a project starts to happen on the ground (implementation in the project cycle), SIA activities delve into the *predicted* impacts. After the first project actions take place, there are *actual* impacts that can be described and measured. Information is needed about the actual impacts so that they will be properly managed. Two additional points are useful here. First, we recognise that actual impacts can and do happen in the planning stage. Common examples of impacts during the planning stage are the impacts of site access and investigations such as drillings or surveys,

land acquisition, expenditure on investigations in the affected area, and social conflicts over a proposed project, with a community often becoming divided around those for and against it. There are also demands on local people and organisations for their time and energy in relation to community engagement activities and formal planning procedures, such as preparing for and attending public hearings. The second point is that, when a project is underway (construction through to operation), new impacts are likely to occur, especially as a consequence of other impacts and how they are being managed, or as a result of changes made to a project during construction and operation. These changes may require additional SIA work and appropriate resources to do this extra work. This need for flexibility is discussed further in the next two chapters.

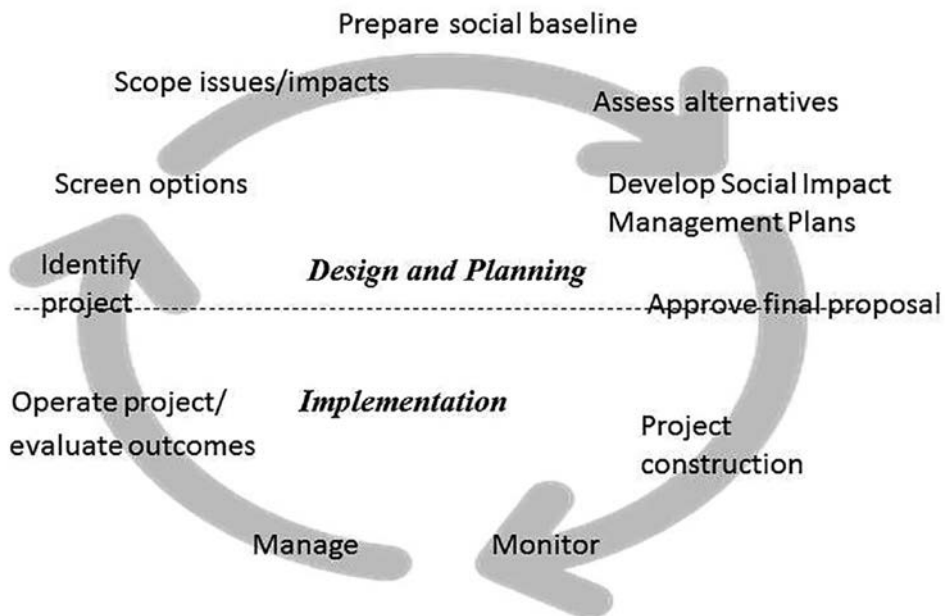
At the broadest level, ‘social’ is one of the types of impacts that people and communities consider to be important, in addition to physical and ecological impacts. Social is an umbrella term for anything that affects people’s lives and livelihoods (Vanclay, 2002). All other types of impact also result in social impacts through ‘impact chains’. For instance, the proposed physical removal of water from a river for an industrial plant could reduce the water available for irrigation, therefore affecting agriculture and livelihoods of people along the river. Noise is usually treated as a physical impact, but noise can affect human health and the quality of life of people living near the source, such as earthworks for a new construction, a highway or an airport. Reduced water quality in a stream due to pollution could affect both the ecology of the stream and increase the levels of pathogens in it, and, as a result, people may stop using the stream to collect water, swim or fish. Dust from a surface mine could affect the health of workers and the surrounding residents if not managed properly. Consequently, young families might choose to leave an area, and thus the local school may lose pupils and teachers, so social life in the community could be reduced. The community could become divided between those who support a proposed mine for the employment it creates, and those who oppose it for the effects it has on the environment and the community. These complex and interwoven sets of effects are usefully recognised as webs or chains of impacts. The key point here is that impact chains often start with an impact that is not obviously social and that, similarly, social impacts can potentially end in bio-physical effects as well, such as solid waste, release of atmospheric carbon and loss of biodiversity (Slootweg et al., 2001; Vanclay, 2002).

There are various ways to describe or classify social impacts. They can be short term or long term in terms of time scale; of high or low probability; adverse or beneficial; direct or indirect; localised or widespread; reversible or irreversible; and once-off, recurring and/or cumulative. These dimensions of social impacts are used to assess the significance of a particular impact, which influences the amount of analysis required for understanding the impact, who is affected and how, and the necessary management of that impact.

SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT THROUGHOUT THE LIFECYCLE OF PROJECTS

The activities that constitute an SIA build on each other over the process of developing a project, including the design, planning and construction of a project, and then its operation. SIA can take place at all the stages of project development (Taylor et al., 2004; Arce-Gomez et al., 2015). The various phases and tasks of SIA can usefully be depicted in a cycle rather than as a linear sequence because SIA should be seen as being an ongoing process (see Figure

12.1). In this chapter, we consider the first SIA tasks in the cycle (i.e. the top half of Figure 12.1, starting with ‘Identify project’) and discuss how these tasks are focused on identifying, assessing and managing social impacts during project design and planning. In these steps, the SIA process builds information and management actions for optimum social outcomes. The second half of the SIA task cycle involves project implementation (construction and operation) (see Chapter 13) with SIA contributing to impact monitoring and management, and then the evaluation of outcomes. Information from evaluation and SIA research completes the cycle, helping to shape future projects and to inform their SIAs (see Chapter 14).



Source: The authors, developed from Taylor et al. (2004); Vanclay et al. (2015); Glasson & Therivel (2019).

Figure 12.1 The social impact assessment cycle highlighting the tasks in the planning stage of a project

IDENTIFY THE PROJECT

Identification of a project begins the project lifecycle and the SIA task cycle. An opportunity to develop a project could emerge in response to a particular problem or need. SIA can play an important part at this early point in defining societal problems and needs. It does this by linking social assessment at the end of the project cycle to the development of new strategic possibilities utilising the experiences of previous or current projects and an understanding of

how a new project will add to social wellbeing. Project alternatives are then weighed up and tested for their feasibility, including their social feasibility via application of SIA.

SIA tasks are applied throughout project development from identification to approvals (see Figure 12.2). The project development activities of identification, formulation, testing for feasibility, and design in Figure 12.2 are intended to be overlapping, because they feed into each other and ideally are integrated steps where project development activities and SIA tasks interact. For instance, the feasibility analysis can be improved as more project information is gathered and alternatives are refined. When identifying the social context of a new project at the early concept stage, it is important to consider the full social context. The social context of a project includes the potential site or sites where a project footprint might be located. It also includes any likely ancillary activities such as access roads, pipes or transmission lines, or worker accommodation. Understanding of the social context is an important part of the early application of SIA to the testing of project alternatives for their social feasibility and the social acceptability of early project designs.



Figure 12.2 SIA and the early project lifecycle

UNDERTAKE SCREENING

In the context of EIA and SIA, screening refers to the process of determining whether an EIA and/or SIA is needed or not, and if so, the extent of the assessment to be undertaken. It is usually a step undertaken (or at least overseen) by a regulatory agency or funding body, but it may also be a project decision based on corporate policy. The reason for having a screening process is to avoid the wastage of resources that comes from requiring assessments when they are not really needed. However, too often screening has been based only on environmental criteria, such as the presence of an endangered species or critical habitat in a project area, or on the basis of the project's physical characteristics (size or type), without giving due consideration to social issues.

An important aspect of screening is to be aware of the options and alternatives for a proposed project early in project planning, as different alternatives may trigger different impacts and therefore different levels of assessment. Screening for potential social impacts follows project identification and takes place prior to detailed feasibility analysis. In these early steps of project development, SIA helps to assess and decide on options prior to a decision to require a full analysis of environmental and social impacts. While the early consideration of project alternatives often emphasises technical and financial feasibility, and economic considerations (costs and benefits), other types of impacts, such as social, cultural, ecological, health and safety, should also be considered. Screening for social impacts helps project teams to include these considerations before a decision to proceed to full investigation of one or more options. This would include identifying any social 'red flags' that preclude or significantly alter any option. Such red flags might include extensive loss of livelihoods, a large incoming workforce, or large-scale land acquisition requiring the resettlement of many people. It is important to note here that the assessment of project alternatives continues through all stages of a project lifecycle, although the possibilities for adapting a plan become narrower over time, from initial options like site selection options to eventually only being able to consider optimal management measures for particular impacts.

Most international organisations and funders of development assistance require screening to be part of the project appraisal process. Usually this process categorises projects either by the type of project (e.g. certain types of infrastructure projects), or by likelihood of significant risks posed by the existing social context (Vanclay, 2020). Various screening tools (checklists) are available for this type of project screening (e.g. UNDP, 2022).

To avoid the negative impacts of projects, there are two important points that are helpful in screening. The first is to develop an initial understanding of the social context to identify any impacts that must be avoided (red flags). Second, it is important to have an understanding of the potential social impacts, at least in a preliminary way, as well as of the capacity of the local population to absorb social impacts and accommodate social development. Any social red flags mean that a project will need careful consideration of alternatives that avoid or reduce the risks they pose. The screening for social impacts could, for instance, point to the need to consider a different project site, route, or a project alternative that has a better chance of enhancing social development and environmental sustainability. Red flags would apply if the host population, or a section of the population, was especially vulnerable to change, as would be the case where: there is a high number of displaced people or informal settlers; a large Indigenous population; weak social institutions; or significant social changes are already underway, such as a drought, loss of a key resource, or a high level of social breakdown or conflict. We argue

that social values can be as important as outstanding landscapes, heritage features or critical habitats when identifying all the values that are relevant to the approval of a project.

The screening of projects is greatly assisted by any strategic social assessment that may have been done (Taylor & Mackay, 2016), and/or where development plans or intentions have already been established. Strategic social assessments would provide a knowledge base about the area or areas where a project will potentially be located. Where strategic assessments are part of planning and policy-making around projects, they help to establish agreed criteria for decision-making and assessing impacts. These criteria can include, for example, thresholds and boundaries such as an urban growth boundary, thresholds for tolerable levels of noise, dust and other environmental hazards, or rules to protect heritage buildings and cultural sites. Strategic social assessments can also add a layer of analysis and decision-making for large infrastructure projects, for example when determining a preferred site and establishing project parameters prior to the project-specific SIA (Mottee, 2022). To make a fully informed site decision, the strategic social assessment would need to be robust, informed by community input and have sufficient detail on social impacts. In one example of this two-phased approach (Beckwith, 2012), some local community members and Indigenous groups remained opposed to the proposed project after the strategic SIA, expressing concern that their views and information were excluded in the preceding site decisions.

DEVELOP TERMS OF REFERENCE, AND CONSIDER TIMING AND RESOURCING ISSUES

An outcome from the screening process is a set of specifications for the full SIA that is sufficient to enable the project developer to prepare ‘terms of reference’ (ToR) to undertake the SIA. The ToR is a separate document, not a screening report, although it follows on from the screening process. A typical ToR would include:

- A short project description and site plan
- The project location and map
- The project background and objectives
- Relevant policy and institutional requirements, including corporate policy, standards and procedures
- An outline of the project context, and key features of the affected area
- The intended objectives of the SIA
- The key steps, methods, timing and milestones to be followed
- The skills expected of the practitioners or team doing the SIA
- Sources of useful background information and other reports.

Project planners should adopt a flexible approach to resourcing an SIA, with flexibility being most important in setting and providing budgets. A staged budget is highly appropriate for the SIAs of large projects because of the importance of first defining what must be done in the scoping stage (see below). Other timing issues are relevant here too. Delays are common in project planning, particularly with large infrastructure projects where timelines usually change as project planning proceeds and the project concept is revised. For SIA, there are important implications that arise from delays during planning and approval processes, including the need to update baseline information and maintain public engagement over extended periods, often in the face of community fatigue with the burden of public participation and frustration with the delays (Vanclay et al., 2015).

Table 12.1 Tasks for scoping a social impact assessment

Task	Sources of information
Understand the proposed project	Project documents and discussions with project proponents and designers
Have an idea of the project area	Maps, initial site visits and key-informant interviews
Initial descriptions of the social baseline	Official statistics, previous social surveys and descriptions
An early understanding of likely issues and effects	Discussions with other experts, ecology, landscape, economics, cultural heritage, etc.
Examine comparative cases to understand likely impacts by particular contexts	SIA research and literature, previous SIAs, experienced individuals
An initial list of possible social impacts set out as impact variables	Expert discussions, brainstorming, standard SIA checklists, noting that it is important to keep an open mind on possible impacts
An early understanding of the key stakeholders, their interest in the proposed project and the best ways to engage with them	A chart of stakeholders, set alongside issues and possible impacts, and a communication and engagement plan based on this information
Start to consider the management of social impacts	An outline of ways to avoid, reduce, enhance and manage social impacts through the SIA
Develop an SIA workplan	The requirements and timing to complete the SIA, including budgets and milestones

Source: After Taylor & Mackay (2022).

UNDERTAKE SCOPING AND DEVELOP THE WORKPLAN FOR THE SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

SIAs require scoping before any detailed work is done so that the effort is focused on the likely impacts, affected areas and key issues of concern raised by the project proposal. Scoping provides focus for the rest of the assessment, including an understanding of broad issues of concern, such as human rights, land rights, equity issues and gender relations (Vanclay et al., 2015). Scoping is an ongoing process, as an SIA is refocused throughout the assessment by ongoing investigations in an iterative way. Therefore, scoping needs to consider how a proposed project design has progressively developed and project parameters have changed. Maps and plans are essential as they help to understand changes to the project footprint, how an area is administered, and what the social boundaries are, e.g. the formal boundaries of the municipal (local government) areas, Indigenous territories, school zones, and the statistical areas used for census data. Effective scoping requires attention to all the tasks in Table 12.1.

The scoping of an SIA should result in an SIA workplan, which would normally be included in an inception report or as part of the scoping documents. It is useful to reiterate the importance of maintaining flexibility in planning and implementing an SIA, which requires the organisation commissioning the SIA to maintain flexibility in relation to the necessary resources and timing to complete the work. Problems occur where the tasks are decided upon and fixed before scoping, resulting in an inflexible approach to the collection of data, the methods to be used, and the level of engagement with affected people. Flexible timing and budgets allow for additional detailed research as may be necessary, such as a community survey to fill gaps in baseline social data, or additional requirements for engagement that were not previously evident.

COMPILE THE SOCIAL BASELINE

In order to assess the nature of likely social changes from a project, an SIA needs a description of the existing social environment where the project will be located. This is called 'the social baseline' (sometimes referred to as the social profile) because this provides the comparison information against which future impacts are assessed. Although the data points are time-referenced and therefore fixed, the social baseline is intended to be a trend-line that is adjusted according to information about current social conditions and established trends into the future before changes from the proposed project. For example, the social baseline would identify current and past population size and provide an indication of whether the population is increasing or decreasing over time. It would also provide a picture of the composition of the population and any changes, such as indications of whether the population is: ageing over time with new people retiring; becoming younger as workers with young families move in; showing increased cultural diversity with immigration; and/or increasing their skill levels as a result of established literacy and training programmes. Knowledge of these underlying trends assists with the description of social impacts by making clear if the cause of a change is due to the project or something else, and whether various sources of change combine. The social baseline also includes an understanding of social and environmental conditions well into the future. For example, changes due to climate change may cause a change in the pattern of settlement as homes move away from natural hazards such as flood plains over time.

Preparation of the project social baseline should start during scoping when it is necessary to identify the likely impact areas and communities affected. As with the assessment of environmental impacts, the social baseline should be updated when more information about impacts is revealed. If, for example, the scoping suggests that the proposed project is likely to affect the amount of water in a river due to new extractions by the project, then it is important to describe all the uses and users of that river system and the affected communities, upstream and downstream and in the surrounding countryside, in addition to those living near the project site.

It is important that various threads of assessment work are well integrated at the scoping stage, providing necessary direction for the collection of baseline data and avoiding duplication of effort. Typical other assessments include health, heritage and archaeological work, and cultural values. Similarly, economic assessments and analyses of land use, agricultural and business activity will have implications for the social assessment of livelihoods. Assessments of landscapes or visual characteristics will have implications for understanding perceptions of sense of place. There are likely to be opportunities to synchronise these areas of work through shared data systems, mapping, and/or GIS frameworks. Systems thinking and diagrams assist in showing the relationships between the various components (Taylor et al., 2004; Ehrlich, 2022).

In a well-integrated project planning approach, the sharing of insights between assessments is likely to result in new issues emerging as the project progresses. If a key issue, impact area, or affected community emerges, then it is necessary to update the baseline to include it, with potential implications for time and budget required for extra data collection. Therefore, allowing budget contingencies and having the ability to vary budgets, timeframes and contracts are essential.

Secondary data are commonly used to compile the social baseline, these being quantitative or qualitative data that someone else has collected. Often these data are official statistics reporting on things like: population numbers and demographics; business activity, employment and

Table 12.2 Information typically included in a social baseline

Aspects of social life described	Variables often included
Population size, settlements, and demography	Total population, age, ethnicity, length of residence
Local and regional economy, production, processing, transport and business activity	Employment, sources of livelihoods, and potential links between sectors, e.g., between primary production, processing, and transport
Landscape, heritage and natural features, sense of place	Valued places and activities; local lifestyles; local histories; outdoor recreation, hunting, fishing, or boating; attractiveness to new residents and visitors
Social infrastructure and services	Housing by type, size and ownership; primary and tertiary health care; schools and training institutions; public transport; family services, policing; emergency services; local government
Community organisation, social capital, and the ability of people to act in their collective interest and build resilience	Leadership, volunteering, community-based organisations; political processes and representation; gender relations; minorities and vulnerability; social inclusion and exclusion
Human rights	The ability to participate in decision-making; the level of discrimination experienced by particular groups; rights of women and children, cultural rights; freedom of expression and access to the media
Social, cultural, and environmental values	Traditional and Indigenous practices, knowledge and groups; religious groups; stewardship; environmental groups
Administration and administrative areas	Jurisdictions of public agencies such as local authorities; planning zones, land rights, land uses, settlement boundaries; tribal boundaries

Sources: Taylor et al. (2004); Vanclay et al. (2015).

occupation; housing numbers, type and ownership; education levels; health and health care facilities; and crime data (see Table 12.2). The data may also include narratives about community change and relevant social histories. SIA generally does not start gathering new data until all other sources are considered and until scoping of the SIA has provided insights into what the important issues are, the potentially affected area is established, and other project parameters such as key sites are determined. The availability of data varies between project locations, some being data rich, many being data poor, or at least data inconsistent. Scoping of an SIA is the time to plan primary research and baseline surveys, and other research should it be necessary to gain a full picture of the affected communities. A typical mistake made by project developers is to decide in advance that a survey done early on is necessary. Surveys are much more effective when other possible sources of information are pursued first, including qualitative methods that provide a basic picture of a social context and community change. Often individuals such as health workers, agricultural officers or village leaders have already collected valuable baseline data in small communities that can be used to inform a survey should it then be deemed necessary.

ASSESS ALTERNATIVES

The design and planning stages of a project are the most practical time to modify a proposal by working through alternatives to get the best social outcomes. Far too often, SIAs are commissioned only when a fully formed proposal is already formulated and thus it is not possible to re-design or reject alternatives as a result of knowledge about their potential impacts on people and communities. Instead, through the phases of planning, design, construction, operation

and closure, we suggest applying a hierarchical approach to avoid, reduce or remedy negative impacts and to also investigate enhancement opportunities:

- Avoid – plan the proposed change differently to avoid negative impacts.
- Reduce – alter actions or add mitigations to reduce negative social impacts.
- Remedy – if there are residual negative social impacts after the above steps, look for ways to fully compensate individuals or communities.

In considering alternatives for project design, siting, transport routes and the mitigation of social impacts, thinking about how to avoid or reduce negative impacts and enhance positive ones should begin at the start of design and planning. Alternatives are re-designed or rejected as a result of knowledge about the potential impacts and the ability to avoid, mitigate and manage them. This design-based approach to SIA looks to predict impacts and refine the project, avoid negative impacts, minimise then mitigate negative impacts, and maximise benefits, within a management framework (NSW, 2022). It is useful to note that in developing this framework, the mitigation and compensation measures themselves also need assessment to identify any additional social impacts that might result from them.

SIA helps planners and affected people think about each alternative and its likely social impacts and outcomes. A project proposal should start with a set of ideas that are developed and improved as alternatives are explored, including with the people and communities likely to be affected by the project. As alternatives are whittled down in number, the SIA goes into the potential impacts of them in more depth, and draws out scenarios for each main alternative. The final option is investigated in detail for its social impacts prior to a decision to proceed or not. It is good practice SIA for a proposed project to take shape as the potential impacts are identified and communicated with affected people. Options are dismissed because they are impractical from a social point of view, or they take further shape through the design approach.

As project alternatives are considered, refined and selected, the SIA assesses the potential social impacts at increasing levels of depth. Scenarios are a useful method, particularly for assessing the feasibility of alternatives, especially when there are multiple project components and complex project activities (Karami et al., 2017). A *business-as-usual* or *do-nothing* scenario is usually compared with one or more sets of alternate actions. For example, city planners could be considering a rapid transit project with varying options comprising different combinations of routes and stations that could represent various scenarios. In such a project, the impacts are likely to be both local and widespread. They might range from short-term impacts of construction activity on formal and informal residents and businesses to longer-term impacts on social cohesion through local movement patterns, and social form, such as urban densification, that differentially affect the social wellbeing of people across a city (Lee et al., 2020; Mottee, 2022).

The scenario method encourages practitioners to use a range of tools, such as comparison cases, simulations and geographic information systems (GISs), often working with a broad team of people, including modelling experts, to develop geographic and time-based projections of change (Taylor et al., 2004). This process will typically involve developing scenarios of change for each main alternative by identifying and testing a series of if-then (cause and effect) propositions in a matrix of potential impacts, causes, who is affected and how, the likelihood of each impact taking place, their significance, and the consequences for social wellbeing. The result is a picture of complex and intersecting impact pathways, with ecological,

economic, health and cultural changes being examined through to their social consequences (Vanclay, 2002; Taylor et al., 2004; Esteves et al., 2017; Taylor et al., 2021).

Once a final project option is defined, it is investigated in greater detail for its social impacts prior to a decision to proceed or not. The potential impacts become apparent as the proposal takes shape, options are dismissed because they are impractical, or as project components are weighed up in more detail and decisions are made about managing their impacts and getting the best social outcomes from a proposed change. Projects often take further shape as they proceed through a formal planning process of official reviews and/or public hearings, especially where there is contestation around net project impacts. The effects are weighed up in more detail and decisions are made about managing impacts. By working through options for mitigating and managing social impacts with the affected communities, it becomes clearer when there are likely to be residual negative social effects that would require some form of remedy or compensation at the level of a population, community or particular group. For example, the Central Plains Water project in Aotearoa New Zealand considered two reservoir options that would flood farmland to store water in spring for use in the summer dry season (Taylor et al., 2007). A preferred option went to a formal approvals hearing, where the commissioners decided, based on the SIA, that the residual social impacts of flooding the affected valley on its farming residents were significant and warranted changes to the project. The reservoir was not approved, but irrigation was seen to bring social benefits. A re-designed project progressed with run-of-river water supplies, and on-farm storage ponds built later, by some farmers, to enhance the reliability of their water supply.

PREPARE PLANS TO MITIGATE AND MANAGE SOCIAL IMPACTS

Social impact management plans (SIMPs) are part of a design-based approach and are being increasingly recognised by practitioners and developers as a key part of gaining a social licence to operate with affected people and communities (Franks & Vanclay, 2013; Holm et al., 2013; Bice & Moffat, 2014). Previously, social impact follow-up was often superficial and usually left to community organisations and local social services (Lavallée & André, 2005). The hierarchical approach to managing impacts requires that a management framework for addressing social impacts be developed early in an SIA, as part of scoping activities. A SIMP should include all necessary strategies and actions to reduce, mitigate or remedy negative social impacts and to enhance benefits.

A common approach during project planning and design is to develop a social impact matrix, which includes potential management actions alongside the assessment of impacts, as illustrated in Table 12.3. The SIA works with affected communities in order to develop management actions in a SIMP for a proposed project. This approach will include working with local leaders, community organisations and public agencies that provide and support social and community development. Some typical plans include land acquisition and resettlement, livelihoods restoration or enhancement, procurement tied to business development strategies, workforce and influx management, gender development, and health and safety (as discussed in detail in Chapter 13 and other chapters in this book).

A SIMP is likely to include, or sit alongside, a communications and engagement strategy, and a complaints procedure and grievance redress mechanism, and necessarily provides links

Table 12.3 *Example of part of a social impact matrix*

Likely impact variable	Source of the impact	Who is affected and likely locations	Management actions to investigate
Incoming population and changing character of the population	Construction activity over 3–4 years	Town xxx where new permanent housing is to be built	Spatial planning for urban growth; use of housing once construction ends; provision of social services for the new population
Impact xxx	Source xxx	Location xxx	Action xxx

to a range of management plans. The main point to consider here is the need to start developing a SIMP early in project planning. Another important point to recognise is that a SIMP is not the same as community investment or benefit sharing often associated with projects. A SIMP is required to mitigate, enhance and manage social impacts. Benefit sharing acknowledges the intent that affected people should share in the benefits of development with enhanced wellbeing outcomes as part of a project management framework (see Chapter 27).

ENGAGE WITH INTERESTED AND AFFECTED PARTIES

Good practice engagement is expected as part of project planning and SIA (Vanclay et al., 2015; see Chapter 20). It broadens our base of knowledge, makes project design and management planning more robust, and increases the chances of successful implementation. Engagement processes add a range of information types to the assessment, make for a better-informed public, and help build positive ongoing relationships with affected people and stakeholder organisations. Engagement refers to a two-way process of communicating information and knowledge about the project, seeking to understand and respond to the concerns of stakeholders, including building local, traditional and Indigenous knowledge systems into the assessment process. In this way, an SIA helps to build constructive and responsive relationships for successful identification and management of a project’s social impacts. Communication is usually associated with engagement in project planning frameworks, but unfortunately many project planners see this as one-way communication, telling affected people about the project, how it will take shape, and the many benefits that will ensue. They exhibit limited views about the objectivity of social data and often have distorted views about local communities (Vanclay, 2020; Moreira et al., 2022). This communication approach to engagement falls at the weak, consultative, end of the spectrum of public participation (Roberts, 2003; see Chapter 20).

The use of engagement techniques, such as one-on-one interviews, small meetings, community workshops, open days, displays, social media, and interactive websites, is an essential part of an iterative and phased approach to SIA, from screening and scoping, to the assessment of alternatives, and to the development of a SIMP. This iteration within an SIA allows the assessment to further identify and reconceptualise social impacts and build information as the assessment goes through the project lifecycle (Taylor et al., 2004). Communication of that information continues through the steps of project identification, design and planning. Also, as information is fed back to interested and affected parties, and is validated by them, the project planning and design team are provided with information from the SIA, which allows them to refine the project to avoid, mitigate or manage social impacts and maximise social benefits.

In good practice SIA, scoping activities at the early stage of the assessment are essential for keeping consultation activities focused on issues that matter for affected people. Scoping helps to establish agreed outcomes from engagement, an overall approach to engagement in order to meet those outcomes, and protocols around engaging with communities, organisations and groups. An engagement plan also outlines responsibilities and timelines for engagement and the communication of information as part of the engagement process.

A variety of public engagement techniques are used to encourage and support public participation in the SIA process and to include local knowledge in the research and analysis. In selecting these methods, some key considerations are the scale of the proposed project and the size of the area that might be affected (including the number of communities), the timeframe available to complete the SIA, and the human and financial resources available to support each technique. Some of the common methods, such as workshops and meetings with individual groups, necessarily take time to set up and undertake. In establishing timelines for engagement, it is important to recognise that some participants (especially those who are representatives of community groups and organisations) will require sufficient time to be able to take the information back to their organisations, to work through it, and report back.

The ability of an SIA to engage fully with local communities is often subject to limitations set by other aspects of project planning, including the timing of site investigations and studies. It is important that the SIA is well synchronised with all project planning from the outset, recognising that the approach taken to other aspects of project development will have implications for the SIA. For example, a common mistake made by project managers is to start undertaking tasks such as gaining access from landholders for exploratory geological surveys, which, because of their poor understanding of local social relations and land tenure arrangements, they incorrectly perceive as only having limited impacts. Any conflicts created or exacerbated at this early time can negatively affect later negotiations needed for land acquisition, resettlement, setting royalties, or agreeing on community compensation.

Another important aspect of engagement at the project-planning stage is the uncertainty and stress created for affected people as they start to learn about a proposed project that could affect their lives. There is often potential for a breakdown in social cohesion and conflict between groups as they take positions on the proposed project. The conflicts between protagonists are usually nuanced, with stakeholders taking positions around the balance of local business opportunities and potential environmental impacts, or around different designations of customary land and who will be the direct or indirect beneficiaries from a development. There is also the often neglected issue of the social impacts that arise from not proceeding with a project, or with a project that is stalled for a lengthy period, leaving a legacy of distrust and ongoing conflicts between individuals and families in local government, Indigenous organisations, and community groups (Ogwang & Vanclay, 2021).

ETHICAL PRACTICE

There are many issues that must be considered to ensure the ethical practice of SIA, because SIA involves engaging with people and gathering information about them (Baines et al., 2013; Vanclay et al., 2013). An SIA needs to uphold principles of impartiality and fairness (NSW, 2022), allowing scope for wide canvassing of issues and impacts, active engagement with affected people, and due recognition of the importance of including local knowledge (Baines

et al., 2003). People who participate in an SIA must do so in an informed way, with their informal or formal agreement (i.e. ‘informed consent’) to take part (Vanclay et al., 2013). Some organisations require formal ethics approval, while others expect the SIA practitioner to abide by the standards and principles advocated by the International Association for Impact Assessment (Vanclay, 2003) or another professional association. A misunderstanding sometimes exists amongst project-affected people that SIA is a decision-making mechanism rather than just the systematic collection of information for a balanced assessment of likely impacts as part of an informed decision-making process. In the design of an SIA and the provision of information about how the assessment will proceed, it is important to ensure that engaged people have realistic expectations about the results of their participation and the likelihood of changing aspects of the proposal or stopping an unpopular plan. It is useful and empowering to undertake early engagement with affected people and organisations around the scope and design of the SIA, and to provide full information about the decision-making process, and how assessments of impacts are taken into account. This information should include discussion of the rights of affected people, grievance redress mechanisms, and other legal and institutional checks and balances available in a particular setting, such as the prevailing environmental legislation and/or the social and environmental standards of a financing body.

A central principle of ethical SIA is to keep the input from individuals as anonymous as possible (Baines et al., 2013; Vanclay et al., 2013). This is important so that participants feel free to speak their mind, thus potentially providing opinions that differ from common views, or that are culturally, politically or commercially sensitive. Where this is not possible, for example, at an in-person community meeting where some people prefer not to speak publicly, the SIA should provide the option for written comments to be submitted, or for one-on-one discussions to be available on request. In this respect, the multi-method approach with multiple opportunities to have a say is an important aspect of ethical SIA practice as well as for robust analysis.

In an SIA report, it is necessary to fully acknowledge all the sources used and the authorship of ideas and information already in the public domain, as might be found in written documents or any form of public media. Good practice maintains anonymity in written reports and documents, and in any form of feedback to the community, unless comments or opinions are already attributed in public, or participants have formally agreed (usually by means of a written form) to have their views made public (Baines et al., 2013).

Ethical SIA practice emphasises quality research and analysis, uses more than one source of data, and reports results in a balanced way. Quality practice does not cut corners in facilitating participation, with practitioners approaching potential stakeholders and looking for ways to proactively involve them in the work. Ethical SIA includes approaching vulnerable and disenfranchised people and organisations, such as women, youth, informal settlers or disability groups, not just public agencies or well-established groups. Often the SIA team needs to advocate to project developers and project-related agencies to support the purpose and benefits of wide engagement as part of accurate assessments. Wide involvement requires a flexible approach and funding support, such as providing transport for affected people to community meetings, translation of key documents into local languages, and working in a manner consistent with local protocols and cultural practices.

Independent peer review, formal review, audit processes and public hearings add to quality practice by ensuring that the results of an SIA are tested and contested if necessary. These processes of review and auditing are usually established and required by the internal corporate policies of a project developer, the public agencies processing an application for project

consent, and by funding agencies and development banks. In most jurisdictions, there will be opportunities for public submissions and legal challenges to proposed projects. Further discussion of social monitoring, auditing and review is provided in Chapter 14.

COMMUNITY-LED SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

SIA practice has turned towards greater emphasis on collaborative and community-led approaches to SIA in line with increased levels of empowerment indicated by the spectrum of public involvement (see Chapters 10 and 20). Bice (2020), for instance, argued that, faced with the global emphasis on new infrastructure projects, SIA practitioners need to consider how to encourage more community-based assessments. These new projects will require SIAs that are undertaken more from the perspective of communities, especially where they require innovative solutions to complex problems, such as adaptation to climate change. A community-led approach looks beyond the immediate social licence of the project to the long-term sustainable enhancement of community wellbeing.

In a community-led approach to SIA, community leaders and organisations work collaboratively with project proponents and SIA experts to discuss desirable projects and generate knowledge on impacts and on the ways of managing change towards the development outcomes sought by local people (Taylor & Mackay, 2022). Benefits include better integration of local, traditional and Indigenous knowledge into project planning and environmental stewardship; project plans and designs are more likely to be acceptable to affected people; and management actions are more likely to achieve positive social outcomes.

Indigenous SIAs are gaining increasing recognition and financial support where Indigenous peoples are present in the area of a proposed project. Indigenous groups are now increasingly being seen as partners in resource developments such as energy projects, with the resulting share of profits being applied to community economic development, education, health and wellbeing. However, as Howitt (2010) pointed out, cross-cultural SIAs and SIA research by academics and external consultants raise issues around appropriate methods and ethics. Nevertheless, we suggest there are opportunities for more community-based Indigenous SIAs that are appropriately resourced, and for more attention to be paid to findings based on Indigenous knowledge.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we considered how the SIA process is focused on the planning and design stage of projects, identifying and assessing social impacts in advance, and integrating the management of social impacts in the early stages of project planning. The SIA process builds information about social impacts and prospective management actions, and integrates that information into the planning and design of project alternatives, through to project construction (Chapter 13) and then to project operation and the evaluation of longer-term social outcomes (Chapter 14). SIA practice is turning towards greater emphasis on collaborative and community-led approaches to the social impacts of projects and increased levels of empowerment for affected people to achieve positive outcomes for their social wellbeing.

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13. Application of social impact assessment in project construction

C. Nicholas Taylor and Jessica Grinter

INTRODUCTION

From the earliest applications of Social Impact Assessment (SIA), there has been considerable focus on the social impacts experienced during the construction of projects, especially projects that involve energy, mining, or the processing of natural resources (Freudenburg, 1986; Taylor & Mackay, 2016). Assessments of construction impacts still form an important part of many project SIAs. This chapter discusses the application of SIA in project construction, from pre-construction (planning, workforce mobilisation, site establishment) through construction delivery to the beginning of project operations. It particularly focuses on the development and implementation of construction environmental and social management plans that are in line with international standards. A systematic approach is needed for SIA in the construction phase of a project to maximise social outcomes from construction and the subsequent operation of the project. We believe that projects with net negative social outcomes should not be given approval, but in situations where they are, for whatever reason, there remains an opportunity to mitigate and manage social impacts.

The chapter builds on Chapter 12, which outlines the application of SIA in project construction and planning. The approach advanced in Chapter 12 is to avoid, reduce, remedy or enhance impacts from project identification and planning to a proposal that is fully designed and then implemented. Continuing this approach, we discuss here how SIA is applied past the planning and design stage through to construction and then to its operation and finally closure (Chapter 14).

Social impact management plans (SIMPs) are a key mechanism for SIA as a project prepares for construction (Franks & Vanclay, 2013; Holm et al., 2013). A SIMP is typically required for managing the social impacts that may result from a project, especially when multiple impacts are predicted and many people affected. SIMPs provide an intersection between project planning and project construction/operation. They embody a staged approach to managing social impacts that emphasises the management of social impacts early on in an SIA, prior to commencement of construction. As pointed out in Chapter 12, a SIMP should include all necessary strategies and actions to reduce, mitigate or remedy negative social impacts and to enhance positive ones.

This chapter makes specific references to the common requirements for the mitigation and management of social impacts for large projects. While SIMPs are usually formally required for large projects, the approach is also relevant and applicable to regional and local projects (Taylor & Mackay, 2022). Common provisions and associated approaches to social impact management include financier/lender social and environmental standards, and any requirements for social impact management in the Construction Environmental Management Plans (CEMPs) that are expected in many countries. Also relevant are the International Principles for

SIA (Vanclay, 2003), the SIA guidance of the International Association for Impact Assessment (Vanclay et al., 2015), and expectations for follow-up (Arts & Morrison-Saunders, 2022), which arguably also apply to SIA, as shown by Glasson (2005). The chapter draws on the experiences of the authors with SIAs across a range of major infrastructure projects, including highways, urban transport, urban development, energy, agriculture and tourism, and our experience in implementing a range of international standards, including those of the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and countries including Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Malaysia, and several Pacific island countries.

SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT IN THE CONSTRUCTION PHASE OF THE PROJECT CYCLE

Figure 13.1 illustrates the tasks of the SIA cycle, emphasising the construction phase. In this cycle, management plans are prepared as part of project planning and design, and are incorporated into the information used to support the project's request for regulatory approval. These approval processes usually involve the national government of the country in which a project is located, and any international funding partners, such as the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation, other development banks, the Export-Import (EXIM) banks of various countries, or other international financiers. Once the project enters a pre-construction phase, and ideally before any personnel are mobilised to the project area, the SIMP should be finalised, and a full set of environmental and social construction management plans should be developed and resourced with appropriate institutional arrangements implemented.

Once project development is underway, the management of social change is assisted by information about what is happening, including from project monitoring (Arts & Morrison-Saunders, 2022). Social monitoring and impact management are at the heart of an adaptive management approach where management actions are adjusted as necessary in response to social impacts as they happen (NSW, 2022). Social monitoring also contributes to the evaluation and auditing of outcomes (see Chapter 37).

Monitoring requirements are usually identified alongside specific SIMP components. Social monitoring includes social data collected on a regular basis, information gathered through engagement activities, general surveillance (such as social agency reporting), and records from any grievance redress mechanism (GRM). The data requirements will be outlined for all agencies and organisations involved in management actions. Social monitoring data and findings will inform any audits or reviews, including those undertaken internally and by independent regulatory bodies, and any ex-post social impact research (as discussed in Chapter 14). The information from all these activities completes the SIA cycle by informing evaluations of social outcomes over time and by providing comparison cases. Monitoring contributes to strategic assessments of policy options, identification of further projects, and to future project assessments. It is a vital input to inform adaptive management, especially where there are long-term project outcomes. Monitoring allows managers and decision-makers to be responsive and proactively manage issues before they escalate and become a threat to the host community, the wider project, and the project owner's social licence to operate.

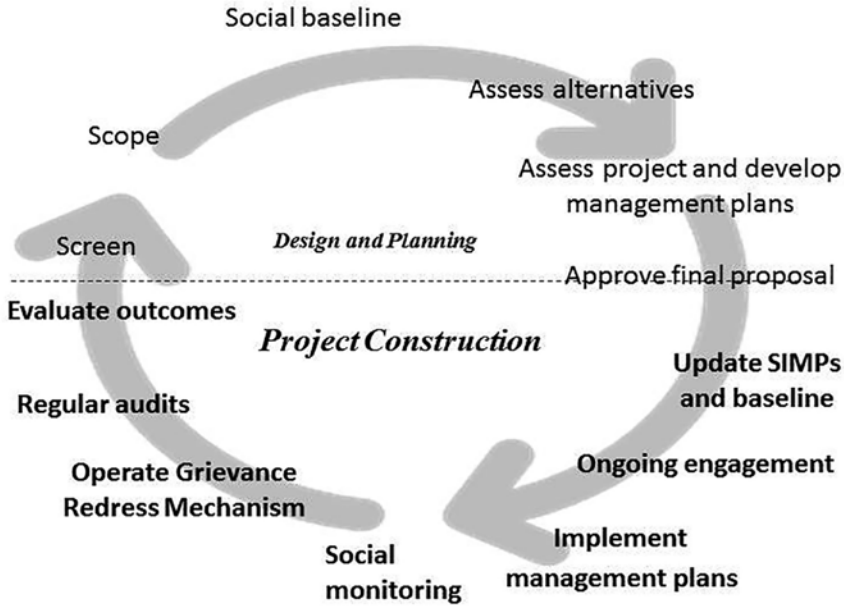


Figure 13.1 *The social impact assessment cycle highlighting construction phase elements*

INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

International conventions and related national laws establish the governance and regulation framework that countries and corporates should observe (Vanclay & Hanna, 2019; see Chapter 2). International human rights provide a framework that project developers should use, particularly if the project has major social impacts. A ‘human rights based approach’ sets out the minimum standards for fair and equitable labour practices, prevention of child labour, anti-discrimination in the workplace, and rights for people with special needs (van der Ploeg & Vanclay, 2017). Many other conventions also apply to SIA, including those relating to Indigenous people, women, biological diversity, sanitation, and access to safe and clean water (Vanclay & Hanna, 2019). Aspects of these conventions are captured in the Sustainable Development Goals, underpin the high-level principles for SIA practice (Vanclay, 2003), and form an important part of a social impact framework (Smyth & Vanclay, 2017). The expectations in these conventions are generally applied to the management of social impacts by multilateral agencies through their standards and procedures for environmental and social management. Projects involving land acquisition, resettlement, disruption to people’s livelihoods, and/or the presence of Indigenous peoples are of particular concern.

The various international standards generally require that several separate management plans be developed alongside environmental management (e.g. risk management; labour and working conditions; community health, safety and security; resettlement; livelihood enhancement; cultural heritage). There are additional complexities when each of the multiple financiers of a project has their own policies and procedures for projects that must be observed. Fragmentation of social impact management under separate plans is a challenge for the development of an effective SIMP. Two further challenges are also common. One is the

potential conflict between in-country and external requirements. Another arises when donors or corporate developers have more resources than central governments, local governments and affected communities within the host country, and they set unrealistic standards or development objectives without providing resources to host communities and/or governments for this (Smyth et al., 2015).

When the standard of social and environmental practice in the host country is significantly different to what a project developer and/or contractor is used to, there may be a lack of understanding about why a certain action is required. In-country regulators (such as officials with authority to provide environmental approval for projects) may not have experience or resources to assess complex applications designed to meet external requirements (such as those of funding partners). The rigorous processes required by project partners may be seen as inconvenient, unnecessary or onerous by local regulators who are already under-resourced and time pressured (Kahangirwe & Vanclay, 2022). This can lead to complacency from multiple parties and increased non-compliance by project developers and contractors. Ultimately, the result is a lack of social licence to operate, and/or adverse impacts of the project on the natural environment, people and/or communities.

NATIONAL REGULATORY APPROACHES

In many countries, national requirements for impact assessment recognise social impacts alongside concerns about sustainability, and environmental and economic outcomes (Taylor & Burdge, 2004). These requirements generally recognise the need to include mitigation and management of impacts once a project commences. Legislation is under episodic review. In Australia, for example, the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, the government's key piece of environmental legislation, was updated in 2021. In Canada, the Impact Assessment Act 2019 is the current legislation. In 2018, the Federal Government of the United States updated the Clean Water Act (under which the Environmental Protection Agency operates; originally established in 1972). In Aotearoa New Zealand, the Resource Management Act 1991 has seen many amendments and reviews and, in a significant reform of national legislation, the current Act is currently proposed to be replaced by a Natural and Built Environment Act. The 1991 Act recognised the importance of effects on people and communities from its inception and has formal provisions for assessing alternatives to plans and projects (to avoid negative impacts) and requires mitigation and management of negative impacts while balancing outcomes for social wellbeing. More examples of national legislation covering SIA are given in Chapter 2.

ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES FOR IMPLEMENTING SOCIAL IMPACT MANAGEMENT

The organisational structure for a project is often complex, particularly when the project involves multiple parties from inside and outside the host country. Figure 13.2 captures the typical complexities, which include the intersecting requirements and actions of funders, owners, contractors, regulatory agencies, other agencies and social services, community organisations, and affected people. The reality with most projects is that all these actors need

to work together for successful (timely and cost effective) construction and to achieve positive social outcomes, while also avoiding ‘engagement fatigue’. Community fatigue results from poor coordination between actors, especially if multiple large projects are being implemented in one locale, and can cause stakeholders to disengage from community engagement processes, especially if they feel that their opinions are not being adequately considered (see Chapter 20).

SIA can assist projects to cut through this complexity by helping to identify and understand stakeholders and their potentially overlapping responsibilities and interests. SIA can also recommend socially appropriate and responsible approaches to social development. An assessment of community capacity should be part of baseline social analysis, with tangible recommendations on ways to address gaps in technical expertise. Potential mechanisms include pre-construction planning that supports a community-led approach to impact management, such as community liaison groups, community-based development workers, and funding for affected communities (Esteves et al., 2012). It is helpful if management plans and organisa-

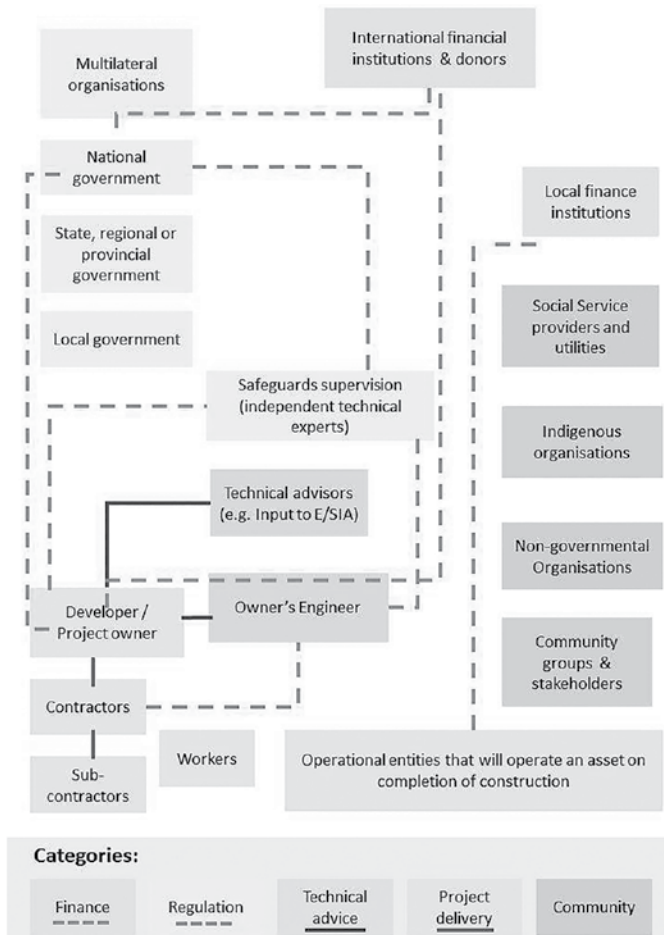


Figure 13.2 *Complexities in construction organisation*

tional responsibilities are agreed by contractors at the time of procurement for construction, so that obligations around the content of these plans and their implementation is fully recognised by all parties, and a sense of mutual ownership and accountability achieved. Reflecting the multi-faceted nature of social development, these obligations necessarily involve a wide range of actors and actions. They can include commitments by the developer, contractors, host government, local government and third parties (including host community leadership and organisations, and other non-government organisations).

REPOSITIONING TO PROJECT PRE-CONSTRUCTION

An SIA prepared for project design and approvals is necessarily predictive. In the process of predicting risks and associated impacts, it is important to consider how the impacts can be avoided and managed. The SIA should provide information about which social impacts to monitor and manage based on their assessed *level of significance*, noting for each impact:

- The likelihood (risk) of that social impact occurring, based on different activities or aspects of a project.
- The consequences of subsequent impacts that may result from an impact.
- The duration of the impact (a period of time).
- The scale of the impact (the area affected, where the impact will be, the number of people and properties affected and how, and whether the impact is temporary/short term or permanent/long term).
- The extent to which an impact potentially contributes to the cumulative experience of impacts in the community.
- The capacity of affected people to absorb the impact and any specific vulnerabilities in the affected populations.
- Social science knowledge about the impact and related social change.
- Experience with this type of impact (which can be used to help assess its significance).
- The assessed level of concern from stakeholders about the impact, which also contributes to assessment of its significance.
- The ability to manage the impact and the likely residual impact.

The SIA is a crucial linking document when commencing pre-construction planning, as it provides the detail necessary for initiating specific management plans based on the assessed significance of impacts, and ideally will include elements of these plans, at least in outline form, with specific recommendations about mitigation and management. Unfortunately, there is often a problem in the shift from impact prediction for design and planning to impact monitoring and management during construction. SIAs in particular, and EIAs in general, often contain little or inadequate guidance regarding impact management when moving into the construction phase.

The shift from planning, design and approvals can see alterations to project components either at the point approvals are obtained, or as major contractors are engaged. For example, as part of project approval, a developer may be required by the approving authorities to consider a different route for an access road, or change the alignment of project infrastructure. In an airport project on a constrained island area, to avoid resettlement of people, a compromise was reached with authorities to bring the perimeter security fence closer to the runway, thus

avoiding loss of houses and productive trees. These sorts of changes and adaptations are an essential part of good project planning and design. SIMPs, and those who implement them, need to be flexible enough to respond to changes in an agile manner, without compromising on social outcomes.

An inadequate SIA at the planning and design stage has considerable implications for the final design of a SIMP, as it necessitates backtracking to fill gaps in the original assessment. Furthermore, as there is often a delay between preparing the SIA and the start of construction, the SIA and management plans could require substantial updating and rewriting. Another problem is that approvals for a project often rely on good intentions by the developer to prepare management plans. When construction commences, these good intentions and commitments by key parties, including compliance with formal conditions, can suddenly reduce in priority or disappear altogether. Social impacts can easily get low priority when meeting project deadlines once approvals are gained for the project to proceed.

It is often the case that the team who prepared the SIA and made initial recommendations about the management of social impacts is not the team that will prepare the detailed SIMPs. This results in a breakdown in the flow of information from impact prediction to impact management, especially because of the time lag between project planning, approval and implementation, with delays being common. This can lead to new personnel preparing the SIMP and preparing for construction. Often, they have little or no experience in SIA and social practice actions such as a stakeholder communication or grievance redress mechanisms. There is a considerable risk that they adopt a top-down, technocratic approach, consistent with their corporate ethos but unhelpful to a consultative SIA process and collaborative approaches.

It is important to build an updated engagement plan into construction management in the pre-construction phase. This further engagement can and should build on the engagement undertaken during project planning and design, the SIA, and during preparation of the SIMP. A dynamic engagement plan will include regular updates of project stakeholders and the system of communication. It should confirm the concerns of affected people, communities and stakeholders about issues that arose during the planning stage SIA, and identify any new issues. At this pre-construction stage, it is particularly important to consider any new opportunities to enhance social outcomes, for example, through procurement of local labour or support for local businesses to participate in the project. It is also the time to consider how ongoing engagement will assist the project to test the efficacy of all mitigation measures.

UPDATE THE BASELINE IN PRE-CONSTRUCTION

If the period between completion of an SIA and commencement of construction extends over several years due to finalising designs, approvals, finances, negotiation of land access, benefit-sharing agreements, or procurement of the principal contractor, then the social baseline of the original SIA will need updating to fully inform the SIMP. This updating of data requires sufficient resources. If the original SIA team is no longer engaged, additional baseline analysis might be limited by the available capacity to implement basic social research methods. We have noted instances where junior staff and office administrators get ‘roped in’ to conduct social baseline surveys, although they lack cultural sensitivity and the experience to pick up on local nuances. Skills to achieve ethical standards (Vanclay et al., 2013) are also an issue, raising questions about anonymity and data protection, for example, at a time when there are

heightened community sensitivities around a project commencing alongside pressure to get construction started.

It may be necessary to add sensitive information to a social baseline as management plans are developed. For example, the plan may require information about the prevalence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), mental health issues, substance abuse or domestic violence, which can be difficult to obtain from local communities. Management plans require this baseline information, yet the practicality of obtaining sensitive information is not always fully considered or understood, especially in traditional communities.

COMMON TOPICS FOR SOCIAL IMPACT MANAGEMENT PLANS DURING CONSTRUCTION

Table 13.1 provides an overview of the topics typically listed in a SIMP. The description (purpose) of these topics incorporates our observations about some of the challenges that can be faced by large construction projects. Most of these topics are discussed in more detail in the following subsections.

Project-Induced In-migration and Influx Management

The assessment, management and monitoring of a project-related influx of people are complex tasks, requiring coordination between several of the actors identified in Figure 13.2. Public-sector social service organisations, such as government departments representing women, children, ethnic minorities, health services, employment/economic development and public order (e.g., police force), have a particularly valuable role as facilitators of some of the key solutions required to mitigate influx-related impacts. Project developers and contractors should liaise closely with, and work alongside, social agencies to proactively monitor changes in local demographics, social cohesion and social behaviour in affected communities arising from any influx of workers due to construction activity. The identification and management of influx-related impacts are conceptually challenging, and often difficult for project owners and construction management to grasp. This is partly because influx-related impacts will generally not become noticeable until well into construction delivery, for example when the peak workforce arrives to complete a major engineering milestone. Practical concerns include the integration of newcomers into host communities, the management of social conflicts, the provision of temporary and permanent accommodation, expansion of social services to cater for increased demand, and leaving a sustainable social legacy of new facilities and services. More information on this topic is given in Chapter 26.

Community Health, Safety and Security

Community health, safety and security are often poorly understood, inadequately delivered, and under-addressed in SIMPs. In relatively disadvantaged and/or developing communities, where health outcomes are poor and health services and infrastructure are already highly limited prior to commencement of a project, it can be difficult to obtain robust baseline data. It can also be challenging to draw out potential impacts from project activities when the baseline of community health is already low. Additionally, the preparation for health impact manage-

Table 13.1 *Typical topics covered by a SIMP and their purpose*

SIMP topic	Typical purpose
Influx management	Measures to minimise the impact of the project on local population demographics, housing, infrastructure, social services and social fabric, particularly in relation to: the in-migration of workers; secondary in-migration of people wanting to gain financially from the economic growth the project is perceived to bring (such as small business owners, informal traders); child and youth exploitation; and gender-based violence (see Chapter 26).
Community health, safety and security	Measures to mitigate the spread of communicable and non-communicable disease and/or exacerbation of lifestyle-related health conditions due to project activities (see Chapter 22).
Employment and labour management	Controls to ensure that project labour resources are engaged to enhance social wellbeing and provide work in fair and equitable conditions in accordance with international labour practices and the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
Gender planning	Provisions incorporated through the plan and targeted actions to promote gender equity and diversity amongst project workforce and stakeholders, including to encourage equal participation and to empower women as part of stakeholder engagement activities (see Chapter 16).
Land acquisition, livelihoods enhancement, and resettlement plans	Agreements between the project and stakeholders including Memoranda of Understanding, compensation and resettlement agreements, and details of any associated management plans (see Chapter 23).
Benefit sharing programmes	Plans to share project benefits with affected people and communities, distinct from mitigation actions, including funding and allocation mechanisms. Importantly, these programmes clearly identify any beneficiaries to the project from the outset (see Chapter 27).
Stakeholder engagement	Summary of stakeholder engagement activities to be undertaken as part of project construction to mitigate and manage identified social impacts. Often includes a schedule of activities and identifies personnel and resources to undertake these activities (see Chapter 20).
Communications	Protocols for communications from the project team to the workforce, lenders, government officials, as well as to affected people, other interested parties and the general public. Communication should be designed to convey specific messages regarding project activities, manage public expectations, and avoid mixed-messaging and confusion of stakeholders.
Grievance redress mechanism	Sets out the project-specific mechanisms that will be used to acknowledge and provide redress for any grievances raised externally or internally to the project.
Social monitoring and evaluation	Sets out the monitoring activities that will be undertaken to track progress with implementation of the SIMP and evaluate whether impacts have been effectively mitigated and managed (see Chapter 37).

ment requires highly specialised knowledge (such as a population health expert, epidemiologist and/or general practitioner in the local area), which can be difficult to access, especially in remote communities.

In these cases, there is scope for a project to provide significant benefits to affected communities by improving access to health services (for example, through new health clinics, water supplies, public transport, improved roads and walking tracks) and by providing a mechanism through which public health and community health resources can be distributed to local communities. Some developers are often reluctant to implement more than the 'bare minimum', and opportunities for enhancement may be dismissed as being beyond what the project developer would expect to be responsible for. However, these interventions can result in a healthier, happier and stronger workforce for the project and a positively engaged local community. Where developers become aware of the tangible outcomes to be gained, they may be more willing to do more.

It can be difficult to measure progress in the implementation of workforce and community health initiatives. A key challenge is the collection and appropriate use of confidential health

information, for instance data on sexual and mental health, and gender-based violence. In many cultures, these topics are culturally inappropriate to discuss with outsiders, or even within close family groups, and interviewers may receive very limited information on these topics. It is common for a project medical team (contracted by the developer or contractor) to conduct such interviews, perhaps accompanied by a social or health and safety practitioner. If the interviewers are not well known to the participant, this can be an obstacle to gaining trust and obtaining highly personal information. More information about community health, safety and security is available in Chapter 22.

Managing Human Resources and Construction Workforces

A SIMP should identify measures to ensure that project workers are treated fairly, equitably, and in a manner that does not alienate their universal human rights. Most construction projects involve a project developer and/or contractor organisation, from outside the host community, and in many cases also outside the home country. In both host and home situations, but particularly the latter, there can be significant variations in workplace culture and expectations of and from a labour force. Some societies are hierarchical and rigidly structured in their approach to human resource management, meaning female workers, those of an ethnic minority or those with disabilities are not empowered in the workplace. Other countries value transparency, empowerment and development of employees. When variations in management structures and protocols and opposing workplace cultures are brought together, as on many international construction projects, there can be significant challenges, for example:

- Racism and prejudice, restriction of access to resources, and lack of empowerment (workers feeling they cannot speak up about unacceptable behaviour or policies).
- Inequity and inconsistency in the application of human resources policies and access to information, for example, treating foreign workers differently to locals, reluctance to establish permanent contracts for local team members versus casual contracts that provide less job security, and failure to cater for language barriers and illiteracy in the workforce.
- Foreign workers/outside in skilled and highly paid roles, leaving only non-skilled (and poorly paid) roles for local workers.
- Itinerant managers (for example, those on a one-year rotation) who are not fully invested in developing a positive workplace culture and do not care about the consequences of certain actions.
- Use of 'probationary' periods to avoid signing more permanent/reliable contracts. This brings financial insecurity and stress, particularly to workers where this is not usual practice.

These practices will eventually erode the reputation of the project developer and/or contractor within the local community and potentially disrupt labour supply (Hanna et al., 2016). Good, reliable workers will not want to work for an employer that does not treat them respectfully or fairly. To combat this and to promote responsible hiring practices that align with other elements, such as agreed community benefits provided by the project, project developers and contractors are encouraged to commit to a recruitment hierarchy setting out priority for different groups of workers depending on their origin, residency and social status. For example,

the project could commit to actively seek, train, recruit and hire workers according to the following priority ranking:

1. Local and/or Indigenous people living within directly affected communities
2. Local people from neighbouring communities
3. Non-local nationals (i.e., from other parts of the same country)
4. Foreign workers.

Priority should be given to hiring Indigenous persons or people from vulnerable groups (including women, landless people, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities) both as direct labour for a project and as suppliers of goods and services. A procurement plan can stipulate requirements that support local workers and small businesses and set out a transparent and auditable protocol for procuring suppliers for the project (Esteves & Vanclay, 2009; Esteves et al., 2012). This plan can be used to mitigate issues relating to: perceived conflicts of interest; nepotism; illegal hiring practices; fair and equitable wages; tax compliance; worker health and safety; and capacity/capability of suppliers to deliver a service. Without such a plan, contractors will likely only have the possibility of using convenient or cheap options, including out-of-region workers. Contractors and developers need to consider support for local businesses in meeting project requirements, where that is required, such as up-skilling and training on how to prepare applications for project work and accompanying documentation. The procurement process should not be so onerous as to actively exclude or dissuade local businesses from providing services for a project.

This part of the SIMP should also cover the benefits to be afforded to workers on the project where applicable, including health and education services, and food and accommodation provided by a project developer or contractor. Common provisions for large projects with on-site accommodation (or with a high proportion of fly-in-fly-out or foreign workers) include:

- Safe, dedicated transport to and from the work site and accommodation, such as a scheduled shuttle.
- Cooked food, or a food allowance/voucher (the latter often being targeted to support local hospitality businesses).
- Protocols for receiving external visitors to accommodation, or for visiting family and friends in the nearest populated centre.
- Clean, safe and reliable drinking water supply (on larger projects this may require the use of an on-site water treatment plant).
- Hygiene facilities, including dedicated private and secure facilities for women; laundry and cleaning services.
- Safe, clean waste recycling and disposal.
- Internet connectivity, phone call allowance.
- Entertainment and physical exercise (e.g., on-site gym, sports facility, TV or cinema, games room).
- Vaccinations, first aid and on-site health care; may be limited to a paramedic with dedicated ambulance and/or a first aid unit, or on larger projects could also include a dedicated medical staff and on-site treatment capability.
- Sexual health advocacy/education, including provisions of prophylactics and contraceptives.
- Access to mental health support (such as a counsellor or occupational therapist).

- Emergency medical evacuation provisions (such as membership of a medical evacuation scheme and support for local emergency services as appropriate).
- Safety equipment including day-to-day personal protective equipment (such as a work uniform and boots) but also specialist equipment like mosquito nets, malaria test kits, water purifiers.
- 24/7 security surveillance and protection of workers.

Not all projects need to provide on-site accommodation. The decision to provide dedicated accommodation (and whether it shall be temporary or permanent) and any ancillary services is best made early during the SIA. Planners also need to keep in mind the common requirement for project-related infrastructure to either be removed (and the land reinstated to pre-project state) or (with approval of the local community) repurposed for alternative use once construction is complete. Repurposing accommodation facilities and associated infrastructure (such as modular wastewater treatment plants) can be a great benefit to local communities but needs to be carefully managed to avoid any unintended consequences, such as ongoing costs or exacerbating existing conflicts and/or inequities in the community.

Gender Planning

Experience across project types shows that impacts are often differentiated by gender, so impact assessment and mitigation actions or remedies also require a gendered response (Kimotho & Ogol, 2021; see Chapter 16). Therefore, there is a strong focus on gender development throughout SIMPs, especially those funded by multilateral organisations. Their requirements for Gender Action Plans, along with detailed monitoring metrics, can add to the volume of plans required for large-scale construction projects. For this reason, it is usually preferable to mainstream gender into all aspects of SIMPs and avoid unnecessary documentation.

Land Acquisition and Enhancement of Livelihoods

Land acquisition and resettlement are typically planned in an SIA and as part of the SIMP, with detailed planning done in the Resettlement Action Plan (see Chapter 23). These plans must be forged through participatory decision-making, including any negotiations around free, prior and informed consent when applicable (Hanna & Vanclay, 2013). While resettlement practice is improving, there are still many instances where resettlement has failed communities, particularly Indigenous communities, and livelihood enhancement has not been well designed or implemented (Smyth et al., 2015; Vanclay, 2017; Esteves, 2021). Problems that typically arise when preparing a SIMP include time delays and a lack of continuity and alignment between preparing plans for land acquisition, resettlement, enhancement of livelihoods, and related actions taking place within a SIMP. These issues can obstruct effective communication of management plans to affected people and teams assembled for project construction, with a lack of commitment to agreed processes of land acquisition, livelihood enhancement or resettlement.

The resettlement of project-affected people is common in projects that require large amounts of land, such as mines, and hydro-electricity and water storage reservoirs (see Chapter 4). The level of compensation and nature of replacement housing and facilities can involve intense negotiation (often taking years) and a complete and permanent agreement is

often never achieved. When people see the replacement housing and livelihood programmes being offered, some may consider that they do not meet their needs or desires, especially those of women and children (Smyth et al., 2015). Problems often arise when there is disparity in treatment. Poor preparation leads to conflict, grievances, and pressure to alter agreements after the fact.

Governance structures are key to successful resettlement planning. Key figures in affected communities may influence discussions and expectations. A resettlement plan requires awareness of the multiple roles held by community members and potential conflicts of interest – political, economic, tribal/socio-cultural and kinship based. In a weak governance structure with inequities of power and influence, an individual or single group can disrupt planning and implementation if roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined and agreed by all affected parties, and if mechanisms to deal with latecomers and grievances are not clearly established and administered. These mechanisms must also include provisions for ongoing monitoring and adaptive management.

Finally, it is important to note that land acquisition, compensation and resettlement are mitigations, and do not constitute benefit sharing, although there may be opportunities to create wider social benefits in resettlement, such as livelihood enhancement, training, capacity building, additional housing, and new infrastructure or services like health and education. Clarity is needed in the communication and implementation of these benefits as project components, sub-components or additional investments that they represent, with an eye to ensuring equitable delivery across social outcomes (as also discussed in the next chapter on project operation. Note also that resettlement is discussed further in Chapter 23 and benefit sharing in Chapter 27).

Grievance Redress Mechanisms

Grievance redress mechanisms (GRMs) are an important mechanism for ongoing engagement with affected people and communities. They need to be adequately developed and with a sufficient level of oversight that matches the scale and type of project. Usually, a GRM will apply to all aspects and impacts arising from the project that are of concern to affected communities. However, a GRM does not usually address all grievances that may exist in a host community, such as those unrelated to the project. Nevertheless, an understanding of any underlying personal or legacy issues may be important background information in finding solutions to any issues that arise.

It can be easy for project managers and contractor personnel to fall into the trap of thinking ‘all grievances are bad’, and thus avoid reporting grievances to regulators or oversight organisations, such as regional and national governments, or international financial institutions. This attitude can usually be curtailed with early and open communication about the purpose of a GRM, and the positive outcomes that can be achieved from it if implemented effectively, with empathy and respect to affected people.

The following are ways in which a GRM helps to deliver project outcomes:

- It is inevitable that grievances will occur, especially for very complex projects affecting a large population and providing significant benefits (such as a large facility or infrastructure development). Establishing a GRM builds an understanding from the early stages of a project, for all parties and management personnel, to expect grievances to occur.

- Frequent low-level grievances can be viewed as a positive outcome because they indicate that the GRM is functioning effectively. Stakeholders feel empowered to make their opinion heard if they have suggestions or are dissatisfied with project activities. It also indicates that a culture of continuous learning and adaptive environmental and social management is in place.
- The information collected and analysed as part of a GRM is a key social monitoring input that provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of mitigation measures and management approaches applied on the ground at all levels of the project. This knowledge will assist project managers and operational personnel to become familiar with the impacts of their work in the local context and the expectations of their stakeholders.
- Monitoring and evaluation processes utilise GRM records to check if lessons are learnt and corrective actions taken to avoid recurrence of similar community concerns in the future. This aids in preventing frustration from escalating to a level of conflict between local communities and construction teams and saves the project time and resources in dealing with complaints, or by avoiding them in the first place.
- The process of working together to resolve issues can strengthen relationships between project organisations and communities over time and build the social licence to operate (Dare et al., 2014).

Communication about the GRM process within the project team and to stakeholders is a key aspect for success. Multiple avenues of communication ensure no stakeholders are disadvantaged due to lack of access to telecommunications, reliable internet, physical location, literacy, or social hierarchies, including gendered ones. Developing a quick and consistent response format is vital to establishing trust and validating stakeholders' concerns early in a project. Reporting procedures should not be so onerous that the response time is significantly delayed beyond a few working days. For example, requiring all outgoing communications (such as acknowledgement letters) to be reviewed and approved by senior management would be a highly restrictive practice certain to result in delays. This type of 'top down' approach is likely to create negative outcomes. It also adds delays to the time taken to officially respond to grievances. Complainants may then begin to feel that they have not been heard or considered seriously, feeding into a perception of bureaucratic inertia, lack of trust, and tendency towards conflicts with the project rather than constructive relationships (see Chapter 21).

The organisation's capacity to implement GRMs is an important factor to consider in designing a GRM for a project. Staff within developer and contractor organisations may never have experienced use of a GRM and, likewise, affected people may need to be sensitised into the mechanism through community outreach programmes and targeted communication. There are many useful resources available to assist in building the capacity of project staff to implement GRMs (CAO, 2008; IPIECA, 2015).

Monitoring requirements need to be factored into the design of a GRM to determine performance against agreed indicators. The format and content of a GRM register, where all grievances and actions taken to address them are logged, must be aligned to provide information for social monitoring purposes. For example, if the project is required to aggregate all performance data by gender, or residence, or project connections such as employment (to measure any inequalities or bias on that basis), then it may be necessary to record relevant information about the person or group making a grievance. Designing a grievance register to

collect a robust dataset will improve all the social monitoring outputs. Care must be taken to ensure that such data collection does not deter people from submitting grievances.

Social Monitoring

Monitoring is the systematic and regular process of measurement, collection, recording and analysis of data relating to the inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts of projects (Glasson, 2005; see Chapter 37). Once construction is underway, the management of social change is assisted by information about what is happening, with comparisons made against the social baseline to assess the social outcomes. Social monitoring is an essential part of adaptive management and requires clear pathways for how findings from monitoring about social impacts are translated into proactive actions and changes to the way construction is implemented (Arts & Morrison-Saunders, 2022).

It is vital to involve affected people and communities in social monitoring, and therefore an important part of any communications and engagement strategy. It provides opportunities for all project-affected people, project beneficiaries and stakeholders to participate in the ongoing processes of: identifying the social and environmental impacts arising from project construction; adjusting mitigation strategies and responses and devising new ones; and in evaluating the outcomes of project management.

Throughout the SIA cycle, it is important to pay attention to the significance of each impact as this information guides the preparation of management plans with respect to the necessary content and detail in them. The SIMP should identify the social impacts that require monitoring with a strategy for doing this work, including frequency of monitoring, and responsibilities for doing it. Important early steps include setting up structures for the management of information including outputs from a GRM, identifying potential or actual conflicts of interest between users of social data, awareness of requirements for compliance, and resources to deliver training around ethical data collection and storage.

It is not good practice to separate the social monitoring framework from the SIMP, as might happen when there are different views about the role of social monitoring between partners in a project. For instance, managers of construction will want pragmatic information about what is happening on the ground with the workforce and affected communities so they can react to issues in a timely manner. Affected communities may want to see a broader picture of social change, so previously-unexpected social issues that arise can be acted upon. For example, if the monitoring finds that the project construction is attracting more families from outside than initially anticipated, who may be looking for work on the project, the additional demand could require additional management responses, possibly by a number of social agencies. Project funders and development organisations may have another perspective on the use of social monitoring, wanting to see results to identify the benefits of construction to the local and regional economy, with less interest in disruption to local lifestyles.

As noted above, fragmented social management plans are poor practice and can result in fragmented social monitoring, with a compounding effect across multiple plans and different institutional requirements. Variables that require monitoring should have a clearly articulated interval for collecting data daily, weekly, monthly or annually. Design of a social monitoring framework should consider carefully: how many separate monitoring variables and actions are needed; scheduling of data collection and reporting; the capacity to undertake this work; and opportunities to combine data collection for greater efficiency. The opportunity to incorporate

community insights into social monitoring is also important, and is considered below. It is vital to involve the affected people and communities in identifying and managing changes of concern to them throughout the life of a project.

Monitoring can reveal cumulative social impacts that require management. This is especially the case with impacts relating to workforce, housing and social services such as health and education, when there may be increasing demand from a project and non-project sources. Cumulative impacts can also apply to the social consequences of cumulative physical and environmental impacts such as decreasing quality or availability of water quality for potable supplies. There may be several causes for why water quantity or quality is reducing over time. For instance, there may be increased sedimentation from project construction as well as from longer-term land use practices in that area.

Community Engagement

Ongoing engagement with all project-affected people, beneficiaries and stakeholders is an essential part of social impact management and the social licence to operate (Bice & Moffat, 2014; Dare et al., 2014). In shifting from impact prediction to impact management, it is important to review and evaluate engagement strategies, actions and project stakeholders, and prepare a new plan for engagement during the construction stage. A communications and engagement strategy is closely linked to social monitoring and provides opportunities for a range of people to provide information evaluating social impacts and their management, what is working for who, and how (Taylor et al., 2021).

A construction communication and engagement plan should include a clear description of responsibilities and channels for people to communicate concerns, complaints or grievances. Some of the concerns raised might include legacy issues that need addressing, or unclear lines of communication. For example, in a port extension project, nearby residents wanted to address longstanding concerns about how the port operators addressed noise. The SIA found that the port lacked clear, internal lines for communicating noise complaints, and these often failed to reach line managers able to adjust operations. A residents' noise committee was formed as a result of the SIA to consider noise monitoring, receive complaints, suggest management actions, and provide ongoing liaison about the effectiveness of measures put in place for operations and about new noisy construction activity.

Formal project liaison mechanisms usually emerge from initial engagement activities with residents and key organisations during an SIA at the project planning stage. They can assist in the development of a SIMP and continue into the construction phase with a general role of community liaison. A group may also be formed into a task force to address the management of social impact issues (Taylor et al., 2004). A task force could form during construction to deal with a particular issues such as influx management or housing. It could facilitate more frequent, structured communication and coordination between the project and public social agencies such as relevant government departments or NGOs.

Some structure is necessary for engagement because multiple parties are involved in communications and contact with people on the ground and in key agencies, reflecting the organisational complexity depicted in Figure 13.2. Problems commonly arise when affected people engage with multiple points of contacts, such as contractors on the ground, an on-site project office, an off-site office, the project owner, community leaders, and local or central government. The engagement and communication plan will provide details of engagement

activities during construction, including frequency, a timeline, key points of contact and responsibilities within the project team, and how activities and ensuing information are to be recorded. Having regular multi-party meetings and an individual responsible for recording all engagement activity and outcomes at a central, shared point are useful.

Typical failures during construction-phase engagement include inadequate understanding of the links between the environmental, social and technical assessments and project feasibility, unclear responsibilities and oversight for communication channels and engagement actions, and inadequate budgets and timelines. Engagement fatigue also becomes apparent, especially when community leaders and agency personnel are expected to continue to provide input to the project as it moves from planning into construction. Issues can also arise when inequities arise over management of particular impacts, with groups in an affected community often considering that they are being treated unfairly, and with consequent breakdown in social cohesion due to the perceived inequitable distribution of negative impacts and project benefits.

Evaluation, Reviews and Audits

Evaluation is an important part of SIA during implementation of a SIMP to develop an understanding of what is working, for who and how (Taylor et al., 2021). Evaluation builds on social impact monitoring and includes the results from a GRM, so design of the social monitoring framework needs to consider useful information for reviews and formal audits as well as for proactive management. Environmental regulators and funding agencies may require formal reviews and audits as part of their social impact requirements, focused on general effectiveness of social impact management or on specific components such as resettlement, livelihood enhancement, gender development or sector performance. Reviews and audits can also include a range of actors such as a developer, funding agencies, regulatory agencies, NGOs and affected communities.

A common issue in developing and evaluating a SIMP is setting realistic performance indicators. If performance is set up to fail, then the project developer or construction contractor will struggle to comply, either from the lens of a formal review, or from the perspective of affected groups and communities. There is no point in those required to implement particular measures considering they are overwhelmed from the beginning, which quickly translates into an underlying feeling of futility in trying to comply, so performance indicators and reporting against them are not taken seriously. It is also important to avoid metrics that involve labour and time-intensive (and repeated) surveys of local populations, especially as the capacity for social monitoring is usually limited on the ground. Indicator-heavy monitoring frameworks are also not helpful. It is essential to guide social monitoring through a continuing SIA process focused on significant impacts and management issues.

CONCLUSION: PITFALLS AND GOOD PRACTICE FOR SIA IN PROJECT CONSTRUCTION

This chapter has considered SIA applied to project construction, when SIMPs are prepared for a project with potentially significant social impacts. SIMPs include the strategies and actions to monitor, avoid, mitigate, manage or enhance social impacts while looking to maximise outcomes for social wellbeing. Management plans are prepared during project planning

and design as part of the SIA, and are usually completed in advance of construction. Many projects, however, experience an extended period between planning, receiving approvals and funding, and commencement of construction. This makes it challenging for project teams to effectively pivot from a planning mindset to managing impacts on the ground.

As the international standards and procedures governing construction are often complex, involving multiple parties inside and outside the project host area and/or country, SIMPs and monitoring frameworks can become fragmented. Often, there is also insufficient expertise and limited capacity and resources in the relevant agencies servicing an affected area or affected communities. Limited time to build local capacity can result in delegation to multiple and changing actors and a lack of continuity. Consequently, gaps arise in the project team's understanding of social issues and sensitivities; and in overall social development, such as for health and safety, housing, training, employment, business support, women and Indigenous people.

Ongoing engagement and the ability to work with affected people and communities is key to successful application of SIA during construction, but there is a risk that engagement and grievance procedures become top down, one-way processes. Good practice social impact monitoring and adaptive management provides information about actual social and environmental impacts on the ground, anticipates new impacts, evaluates management actions and social outcomes as they unfold, and supports a proactive community-based approach to social development.

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14. Application of social impact assessment during project operation and closure

Mike Mackay and C. Nicholas Taylor

INTRODUCTION

In Social Impact Assessment (SIA), considerable emphasis is typically placed on identifying and managing the social impacts experienced during project construction and in the transition to operations. However, little attention is usually paid to the often-extended period of operations after construction wind-down is completed, or to subsequent events, such as project expansion, closure, or to changes and transitions to new forms of resource use or economic activity. The project operational stage begins with the commissioning of the project once construction is completed. Operations can happen over a relatively short period, such as when only a few years are needed to mine a resource, or they can occur over a much longer term, as would be expected with large-scale infrastructure developments, which are also likely to experience upgrades, maintenance, replacement and/or expansion.

Unanticipated social impacts are likely to arise and accumulate once a project has moved into the operational phase. These impacts can be linked to new operational activities, such as the decision to expand a plant or facility, or as a result of wider economic, environmental, political, regulatory and social change processes that interact with the project setting and change the operational context. While change processes can generate additional benefits for the local community, they also can create new issues, uncertainties and anxieties, for example when an operational plant, such as a paper mill, shuts down, leading to the sudden and widespread loss of jobs in local communities (Lovell et al., 2018). These operational impacts need to be proactively assessed and managed in a manner similar to what we discussed for project planning and design (Chapter 12) and project construction (Chapter 13).

Ultimately, the realisation of project benefits and social outcomes in the operational phase depends on several factors. First, there are the outcomes from impact mitigation, including direct social impacts and the impacts arising from the social consequences of environmental impacts. Some outcomes are the result of enhancement activities and project activities directed at improving social life in an affected area. Second, there are the residual impacts that persist after mitigation. For example, if people are resettled or livelihoods restored as part of impact management, there can still be unavoidable social impacts experienced by the remaining residents and by the communities hosting resettles. Third, there are the results of specific actions and funding arrangements designed to share project benefits amongst affected people, including any new social infrastructure, facilities and social development programmes.

SIA practitioners are increasingly relying on the use of standardised social wellbeing frameworks to evaluate project performance and longer-term social outcomes (Smyth & Vanclay, 2017). The challenge is to expand SIA practice from core project activities to wider issues of policymaking and sustainable social development (Bice, 2020). This includes thinking about social impacts when projects close, the workforce leaves or is relocated, and infrastructure is

decommissioned, abandoned or repurposed. Here, at the end of the project lifecycle, SIA practitioners often contribute to thinking about new economic futures and the longer-term social needs of the affected community. Important questions feature here around corporate social responsibility, reparations, accountability for investment in public services and community resilience, capability development, and economic regeneration.

We note that during the planning, design, and construction of projects, responsibilities for conducting follow-up SIA and implementing management actions lie primarily with the project proponent and subsequent operator. In the operational stage, where the sources of change are more likely to be complex and interrelated, there are likely to be a greater range of responsibilities for carrying out, funding and following up project SIA processes. Parties are likely to include, for example, operators, sector organisations, agencies of local, regional and central governments, and Indigenous authorities. Their strategic SIAs into policy and plan making are an important part of the project cycle as they utilise feedback from evaluating project outcomes.

MODES OF SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT IN THE OPERATIONAL PHASE

Figure 14.1 provides an overview of the SIA task cycle emphasising activities in the operation phase, which follows SIA for project planning and design (see Chapter 12) and SIA for project construction (see Chapter 13). During the operational phase, SIA practitioners (ideally) shift their attention from *predicting* project-induced social effects to the tracking and adaptive management of the *actual* impacts transpiring in the project setting.

Some changes leading to social impacts over the longer term may have been underestimated at the project planning stage or seen as outside the remit of the original SIA. For example, an irrigation project can lead to changes in land use that involve intensification of farming systems. These, in turn, can lead to different sets of social changes, such as those arising from the adoption of new farming technologies, changes in land ownership, changes in the amount or types of employment, and changes in the social structure of farming, such as the ratio of workers to land owners, or a shift from family to corporate farming. At the same time, environmental issues could arise from water extraction and nutrient discharges, which in turn lead to social impacts through the availability and costs of potable water supplies, and an increase in health concerns such as for gastrointestinal disorders or cancers. While these changes can be rapid and significant, they can also be subtle, insidious and/or cumulative over time; but all contribute to the net social outcomes of the irrigation project. Some potentially could be anticipated at the time of the project SIA; others are indirect and more difficult to anticipate. These impacts may require adaptive management techniques by individual farmers and farmer collectives. The responsible public agencies are usually involved in developing institutional responses to water management (Mackay & Taylor, 2020a).

During the operational stage of the project cycle, the SIA is anticipatory, retrospective and evaluative in nature – looking back at what has changed or is changing in the community as a direct or indirect result of operations, and the implications of these changes for local people and communities both at the time of the SIA, and into the future. Below, we describe two common approaches used to analyse and evaluate the impacts of projects after the construction phase, namely: follow-up social impact assessment; and longitudinal social impact research.

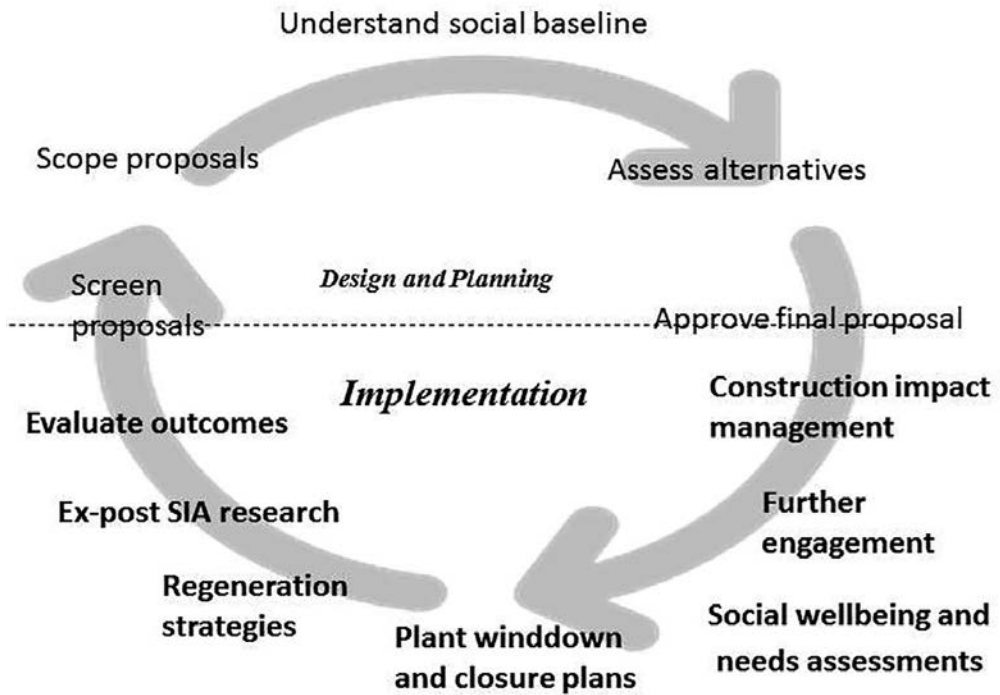


Figure 14.1 *The social impact assessment cycle for operation and closure*

Both approaches are important because they help to assess project performance while also providing experiential learning and the comparative case information necessary to assess new project proposals (Burdge & Johnson, 2004). At this stage of the project cycle, SIA practice and project evaluation coalesce (Taylor et al., 2021).

Follow-up Social Impact Assessment

Once projects have been given the green light to proceed, the assessment of social effects ideally shifts from impact prediction, as in the original impact assessment report, to the inspection, evaluation and management of them as they transpire in the project setting. But, as noted by Mottee and Howitt (2018, p. 46), ‘public reporting of and accountability for delivery on the beneficial social outcomes from projects is at best poor, and at worst, inaccurate or misleading. And follow-up of project outcomes against EIA and social impact assessment (SIA) predictions is rare.’ We agree and add that poor performance in impact management, such as persistent breaching of conditions set during project approvals, and poor responses by regulatory bodies responsible for auditing impacts and outcomes, can add to the legacy of impacts and distrust in affected areas.

The term ‘follow-up’ has been harnessed by the impact assessment community to describe the various ways impacts can and should be assessed and managed once project-work has begun (Arts & Morrison-Saunders, 2022). Put simply, follow-up keeps ‘an eye on the real effects of

projects' (Arts et al., 2001, p. 175). While the focus of this chapter is on the operational stage of projects, including project closure or decommissioning, we recognise that follow-up also has an important role to play in the construction phase (see Chapter 13). In practice, follow-up involves periodic data collection and analysis to assess how a project is performing over time against key performance metrics, sustainability and strategic policy objectives, community expectations, the original impact predictions (that were based on educated estimates), and any formal agreements made between project proponents and the decision-making authority during the design, planning and approval stage of the project (Arts et al., 2001; Baker, 2004).

Follow-up also involves the identification of mitigations that, once implemented, will ensure undesirable impacts are corrected as they transpire in the project setting. Monitoring, evaluation and adaptive management are linked together, as calls for action usually arise from the observations documented during periodic bouts of monitoring and evaluation, and the associated recommendations are acted upon. Action can also be spurred by local media commentary relaying community concerns over unanticipated project-induced effects, and other forms of community irritation that may challenge a project owner's social licence to operate (Hanna et al., 2016a; Mottee et al., 2020).

Communication and engagement are critical elements of impact assessment follow-up (Arts & Morrison-Saunders, 2022). This entails sharing information with the local community (and other affected stakeholders) about the performance of a project, and how the project owner is adapting their work to mitigate unplanned impacts, and how they are contributing to community development more generally. Engagement with affected people and communities in the operational phase of projects is often the responsibility of multiple parties. It is particularly important that they engage widely with all affected people to keep track of emerging social issues following project construction, keep affected people well informed, ensure all voices are listened to, and that local knowledge is respected.

Effective engagement by project proponents, operators and responsible agencies will consider cumulative impacts (Franks et al., 2010; Blakley & Russell, 2022) and consider difficult longer-term social issues such as loss of heritage and intrinsic values, sense of place, inter-generational stewardship, and cultural practices and values. Other changes related to one or more operating developments can include in-migration and out-migration, population growth or decline, changes in employment and labour markets, changes in the demand for housing, changes in cultural diversity and social cohesion, changes in the level of transience in a place, and varying levels of disadvantage and social vulnerabilities (Vanclay, 2002).

A community-led approach to SIA for community changes and transitions is depicted in Figure 14.2. In this approach, multiple participants and leadership organisations are enabled to work collaboratively for positive social change. The figure aligns the common SIA steps, and engagement and analysis of impacts, with community-led processes. This community-led approach to planning for and managing transitions and periods of intense social change emphasises the co-production of knowledge, with community organisations working alongside government agencies and SIA practitioners to generate and share knowledge (Taylor et al., 2021). In the operational phase, community-based approaches are an important way to undertake SIAs that deal with community needs, strategies, initiatives and transitions.

The current principles for best practice environmental impact assessment (Arts & Morrison-Saunders, 2022) emphasise the need to focus on the objectives of follow-up, rather than step-by-step instructions. They recommend starting early (i.e. planning follow-up during screening and scoping) and applying follow-up throughout the various stages in the assess-

SIA process	Community process		Engagement and analysis
Scoping	Community group formed to lead a community initiative or strategy	CO-PRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE	Engage with key stakeholders; initial community meetings
Social baseline	Understand the existing position, social needs and main trends		Assess and discuss issues and options; community workshops
Assess alternatives	Consider issues and potential strategies		Surveys and data gathering by local groups, agencies, affected people; collate local knowledge and expertise
Assess proposed action/s	Strategic plan of action sets out objectives, tasks timing and resources		Workshops and meetings including with and without scenarios and impact predictions
DECISION			
Monitor and evaluate	Monitor, mitigate and manage impacts Evaluate outcomes		Monitor impacts and evaluate outcomes including official data and community experiences

Source: Adapted from Taylor & Mackay (2022).

Figure 14.2 SIA and the co-production of knowledge for community-led change

ment process. Follow-up should be transparent (including pre-defined and well-justified performance criteria and specified enforcement provisions) and accessible to stakeholders, with clear accountability for responsibility. Follow-up should be iterative, and learn from experience to improve future practice and adaptive environmental management, with flexibility to accommodate emerging needs. Follow-up also needs to inform and be informed at different levels of decision-making, as well as consider the cumulative and overall effects of the project or plan (Arts & Morrison-Saunders, 2022).

Using the case of Western Sydney’s South West Rail Link, Mottee et al. (2020) examined some of the ‘practice challenges’ in impact assessment follow-up and how these might be addressed. The 11 km passenger rail line commenced operations in 2015 and was celebrated as a success by all traditional measures: completed under budget, delivered ahead of schedule, and framed as positively contributing to the broad-scale strategic policy and planning goals of the state. However, within 18 months of opening, negative media reports began to surface emphasising unanticipated negative social impacts at the local level associated with, for example, parking availability and traffic congestion at key passenger terminals. Mottee et al.’s (2020) research revealed that, while good environmental and social impact assessment was carried out at the early design stages of the project and through the construction phase, the social impacts that affected the local community after completion remained unaddressed. They called for a greater investment in impact assessment follow-up at the local level to help

manage uncertainties, with a strong focus on the medium and longer-term social impacts and outcomes. Mottee et al. (2020) suggested that, without a commitment to SIA follow-up across the whole project lifecycle, social impacts may be overshadowed by the positive political and commercial hype that often surrounds the shift from construction to operations, particularly when construction is finished within schedule or budget. They also noted that, while significant long-term sustainable and equitable social gains are expected to be delivered by large infrastructure developments, often unanticipated negative social impacts arise over time and need to be addressed before it is too late for them to be managed effectively. Prediction only goes so far and cannot guarantee actual outcomes. Thus, a commitment to SIA follow-up, project evaluation and longitudinal social impact research is needed.

Social Impact Research

Social impact research seeks to interpret the actual social impacts of specific projects (Taylor et al., 2003; Sairinen et al., 2021). It is typically conducted by independent academic researchers who use social research methods and case studies to interpret and describe the social changes that have occurred, or are perceived to have transpired, as a direct or indirect consequence of a project. (For examples of such research see: Wang et al., 2013; Hanna et al., 2016b; Kirchherr & Charles, 2016; Mottee & Howitt, 2018; Mottee et al., 2020; Ogwang & Vanclay, 2021.) Social impact research complements SIA because it provides a basis for developing conceptual frameworks that can be used to examine and understand the complex and interacting processes underpinning rural–urban social change and development (e.g. Vanclay, 2002; Smyth & Vanclay, 2017). This provides a neat link between the applied SIA community and academics (including PhD students) who produce much of the extant social impact research and theorising.

Social impact research has a long history. Early research of this type developed a sociological understanding of communities that rely on a natural resource base and of the range of economic activities underpinning the livelihoods of people (Pomeroy, 2019). It also developed a spatial understanding of the interrelationships between cities, towns and their rural hinterlands (Taylor et al., 2001). The expectation was that this research would be applied to the assessment of new projects and to the larger tasks of social monitoring and policy formation (Finsterbusch, 1985). The community focus of social impact research continues today through consideration of the social impacts of project construction, especially when a large workforce is involved, and in the operational phase, with an interest in how population and employment sectors, communities and social infrastructure are affected over time. The focus extends to project expansions and upgrades, wind-downs and closures, with an anticipatory approach applied to actions like the closure of mining operations and effects on communities highly dependent on a single industry and associated corporate investments, such as company housing for a workforce (Bradbury & St-Martin, 1983; Bainton & Holcombe, 2018).

By way of an example of social impact research, we use our own study of the social impacts of the Alps to Ocean Cycleway (A2O), a 300 km off-road cycle trail that descends from the base of Aoraki Mt Cook (Aotearoa New Zealand's highest mountain and tourist 'hotspot'), through several small settlements in the South Island's Waitaki Valley, before reaching the town of Oamaru (population 13,950) on the Pacific coast (Mackay & Taylor, 2020b). The A2O traverses the valley's cultural landscape, passing by: scenic mountain lands, irrigated

dairy farms; a cascade of hydro-electric dams, lakes, canals and power stations; a mosaic of nature and heritage conservation sites and projects (including stone buildings, industrial history and Māori rock); and myriad tourism enterprises, lifestyle blocks and vineyards. The A2O is one leg of the government-backed Nga Haerenga/NZ Cycle Trail, which comprises an extensive package of on- and off-road bike trails built as local projects, which together form a national network (Kennett, 2013; Bell, 2018). The A2O was developed as a partnership between central and local government and community trusts to support regional development. Partial funding was approved for the A2O in September 2010, and by September 2013, the track was completed, signposted, rideable, and placed under the management of Tourism Waitaki in partnership with Aotearoa New Zealand's Department of Conservation (Tourism Waitaki, 2017).

Our approach to interpreting the social impacts of the A2O was informed by Taylor et al. (2021), as well as by Sairinen et al.'s (2021) framing of social impact research to identify key impacts, in their case in mining. Research preparation involved the design of a flexible strategy to guide the research process, including a stakeholder engagement plan, and exploration of appropriate concepts and useful theoretical frameworks, such as rural multifunctionalism (Holmes, 2008; Mackay et al., 2014) and tourism-led regional regeneration theory (Mackay et al., 2018; Wise, 2016, 2018). Background research identified the impact area of the project, and we developed an appreciation of the historical, environmental and social context of the A2O, as well as the relevant local, regional and national policy settings, such as the District Plan, the Long-Term Community Plan, the District Tourism Strategy, and the regional development setting. Primary fieldwork involved 35 interviews with key informants.

This SIA research found that the A2O was helping to diversify and revitalise the communities and economy of the Waitaki Valley in four key ways (Mackay et al., 2018; Mackay & Taylor, 2020b). First, trail-related visitor spending was boosting the income of many service providers in the area (not just tourism operators), a trend that was expected to continue based on visitor growth projections. Stakeholders recognised, however, that any increase in bikers on the trail would have implications for the capacity of local infrastructure, the natural environment, and heritage resources. Thus, the dispersal of tourists along the whole trail was becoming an increasingly important mitigation measure to alleviate tourist pressure at key sites. Second, the A2O had prompted some residents, often with help from outside investors, to purchase and convert many old rural buildings (e.g., churches, woolsheds, old rail stations) into accommodation, agri-tourism attractions, bike shops, and/or hospitality services such as cafés. The A2O was therefore contributing to the conservation of built heritage. Third, the trail was also providing the impetus for local entrepreneurial experimentation, especially in agri-tourism. Entrepreneurial activity was most obviously occurring in towns and on farms directly adjacent to the trail. Stakeholders noted the importance of connecting towns and sites that were off the beaten track to ensure that they also had opportunities for business development. Fourth, we found that the A2O had become the pillar of the Valley's tourism offering and regional place promotion initiatives. While this helped to generate a sense of regional pride, it had raised concern that the A2O's promotion was overshadowing other tourism offerings for which the area was also renowned. This raised questions about how to promote the Waitaki Valley and specific localities and attractions to visitors in a cohesive and balanced way (Fitt, 2020). We concluded that project-level SIAs, in this case of cycle trails, are needed as part of planning and implementing tourism infrastructure development and that these assessments will benefit from social impact research. We noted that social impact research is important to ensure that

the positive political hype that commonly comes with the opening of new visitor infrastructure does not overshadow the anxieties within local communities, which need to be monitored over time, along with a range of social indicators. We suggested that to underpin sustainable development and wellbeing, ongoing (longitudinal) impact assessment research and monitoring need to be supported and reported, with findings well integrated into future strategic plans, natural resource plans and decisions, and infrastructure investment.

SUSTAINABILITY, SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELLBEING

A key feature of the SIA process is the focus it places on improving the social wellbeing of affected people, while also considering economic and environmental wellbeing (Vanclay, 2003; Esteves et al., 2012; Smyth & Vanclay, 2017; Ehrlich, 2022). The longer-term contribution of SIA to decision-making and the welfare of affected people is particularly important in the operational period of projects in order to help balance the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development. This requires project owners to act in the interests of the host community over time (at least live up to the promises laid out in the initial proposal). Long-term investment in the social wellbeing of the host community has become an important aspect of corporate responsibility and is critical to maintaining the project owner's social licence to operate, especially in the affected area (Vanclay & Hanna, 2019).

SIA practitioners agree that a social development approach is a core part of developing beneficial social outcomes over a project lifecycle and after a project has closed for good. The onus for promoting and funding a community-based approach to social development is seen by SIA practitioners to lie with project operators as part of their social licence to operate, which has become a feature of sustainability reporting and approaches to corporate social responsibility (Bice & Moffat, 2014). Social impact management plans and outcomes, and community engagement actions, are key components of project efforts to maintain a social licence (Martinez & Franks, 2014).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a global focus for sustainability. Many nations have signed up to the SDGs, promoting them through domestic action, international leadership, and international assistance programmes. Sustainability assessment has long been proposed as an impact assessment activity, reorientating practice towards achieving net sustainability gains, reflecting dissatisfaction amongst practitioners about the success of impact assessment in achieving sustainable outcomes (Bond et al., 2012). The SDGs provide a useful starting point for assessment practitioners working with communities (Smyth & Vanclay, 2017). In the first instance, they provide practitioners and affected people with a generalised framework that can be used to develop an initial statement of desired outcomes and targets. In retrospective use, they provide a basis for evaluating and auditing what transpires in the project setting, and how these outcomes measure up with their aspirations and global expectations.

There is much potential for impact assessment teams to move beyond their narrow focus on the mitigation of negative project impacts to a broader focus on sustainable outcomes. Such an approach requires development projects to consider how benefits flow from a project over time and are shared between all stakeholders, including directly affected communities and landholders. Benefit sharing should be built into projects from an early stage, alongside the more usual social and environmental assessments, mitigation plans, agreements on water rights, and technical feasibility studies. A sustainability framework at the strategic level

creates the opportunity for careful consideration of the nature, location and scale of potential future activities in an area informed by community visioning and strategic development plans.

APPLYING SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT TO PROJECT CLOSURE

The closure of operational projects causes a particular set of social impacts that communities can experience as positive and negative effects on their wellbeing. The lessons here are to prepare communities for change whenever possible by specific planning for closure and building community resilience to cope with change. Some changes (e.g. closure) might be known well in advance, such as with a mine, and SIA can contribute to closure plans, including planning for changes in land use or the repurposing of plant infrastructure. However, sometimes closure events are signalled yet uncertain, and depend on economic and policy factors, which can create prolonged indecision, or even a yo-yo effect, where an community is threatened with project closure, people prepare for it, but then there is reinvestment or new activity. Uncertainty about the future of a plant or industry is often associated with changes in capital, ownership structures and new technologies, leading to questions about the future of work in a town, housing, and the sustainability of local infrastructure and services, which may also provide an impulse for people to leave an area. Some closures are sudden shocks with no time to plan, such as a sudden plant closure due to sector restructuring, or as a result of a natural disaster (Arcaya et al., 2020). In these instances, SIA is often applied retrospectively to assist with resulting transitions and to help build resilience to future events (Imperiale & Vanclay, 2016).

In the extractives sector, closure is a normally expected part of the project lifecycle, which ends when operations reach a point of uneconomic performance. Given that closure is anticipated, socially responsible planning requires operators to build an understanding of closure into all project stages starting with the SIA prepared for planning and approvals. This lifecycle approach requires engagement with affected communities throughout the process (Vanclay et al., 2015; Bainton & Holcombe, 2018). The project lifecycle approach has also alerted project developers and affected people to the importance of cumulative environmental impacts and legacy issues, such as remediation of landscapes or restoration of farmland or biodiversity. The onus is on SIA practitioners to adopt this perspective to identify and deal with social legacies and unanticipated social impacts post-project, and in periods of social-economic transition. As with the management of environmental impacts at closure, a range of potential financial contributions and project closure bonds can be explored as part of approval processes and project benefit agreements.

Where it is possible to signal policy changes in advance, a strategic response should address the question of just transitions. For example, the Aotearoa New Zealand central government has led a ‘just-transitions’ approach to a low-emissions economy, which heavily affects the province of Taranaki where there is a major oil and gas sector. In this example, the just transition is based on a collaborative approach between the government, sector groups, education and training, Indigenous peoples, and communities in a strategic plan directed towards a more sustainable and resilient future.

Community resilience is recognised as an important outcome for SIAs when considering the longer-term implications of projects for social wellbeing. Imperiale and Vanclay (2016) considered community resilience as a central consideration for social sustainability, and argued

that SIA provides an action-oriented, place-based tool that empowers communities to consider the impacts of projects, from planning and design through to closure. As Taylor et al. (2021) pointed out, SIA can play a central role in regeneration strategies for communities as they cope with new proposals, long-term transitions, and uncertain futures. Thus, to tackle regeneration problems, communities need capacity in SIA and in the evaluation of outcomes for wellbeing, utilising co-production of knowledge forged between SIA practitioners, local governments, and place-based organisations.

CONCLUSION

SIAs typically focus on predicting and managing the social impacts of project construction and operations. However, less attention has been given to understanding the actual impacts of operations all the way through to SIA follow-up, or to the need for subsequent social research into the actual social impacts experienced by communities. It is important to realise that the period over which a project operates is likely to include subsequent events, closures, and transitions in resource use or associated economic activity, which affect what actually happens to communities, and can lead to major differences between what was predicted in an ex ante environmental and social impact assessment and what actually transpires. This chapter argued that enhanced social wellbeing outcomes can be achieved by applying SIA throughout the whole lifecycle of a project. This would include project monitoring, evaluation, and by considering the ways in which the findings of SIA research can be integrated into policy formation and sustainable development strategies. The principal challenge for SIA practitioners in the operational phase of projects is to expand their attention away from just mitigating the negative impacts of core project activities to consider wider issues of social development and the appropriateness of policy (Bice, 2020). We also consider that another challenge to improve outcomes for affected people during project operation and closure is for SIA to place greater emphasis on community-based approaches. By directing SIA effort into strategic planning and policy settings, new project proposals could benefit from the development of a strategic development framework adapted for different contexts. This would enable SIA follow-up and social impact research to contribute much more constructively to the identification of different social development tracks, economic activity, and livelihoods, leading to improved environmental and social outcomes and higher levels of resilience to support future adaptations and transitions.

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PART V

CORE CONCEPTS IN SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT

15. Human rights and due diligence

Kendyl Salcito

INTRODUCTION

In 2011, the United Nations Human Rights Council unanimously endorsed the *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* (UNGP) (United Nations, 2011). The UNGP built on a three-pillar framework that articulated a state duty to protect human rights, a corporate responsibility to respect human rights, and a shared commitment to remedy abuses. The UNGP presented a path for closing the governance gap that had left victims defenseless when their human rights were harmed by non-state actors. In articulating how corporations could be held accountable for human rights abuses, the UNGP specified that businesses should assess their actual and potential human rights impacts. As early as 2007, the author of the UNGP, John Ruggie, had contemplated that Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs) could be a model for Human Rights Impact Assessment (HRIA), writing that: ‘Like ESIAs, HRIAs should describe the proposed business activity [and baseline conditions] ... After describing those baseline conditions, HRIAs should put forth a view of what is likely to change because of the business activity’ (Ruggie, 2007, pp. 4–5). Ruggie intended for companies to ‘know and show’ their impacts rather than experience the ‘name and shame’ campaigns whereby activists identified corporate human rights abuses and used publicity to press for change. In the ensuing decade, an array of HRIA methodologies was published, largely building on key concepts in ESIA (Salcito et al., 2013, 2014, 2015a).

Over time, approaches to HRIA have diversified rather than converged. Some corporate actors have sought to consolidate their impact assessment processes by integrating HRIA into ESIA processes (Ruggie et al., 2021). Others have shifted human rights considerations into enterprise risk management functions. However, the proliferation of methods and processes has not demonstrably reduced adverse human rights impacts caused or exacerbated by corporate actors (McInerney-Lankford, 2019). Given the absence of clear guidance for how human rights impacts should be assessed and managed, there is growing evidence that companies are failing to foresee human rights harms or to manage them effectively.

This chapter examines the evolution of corporate human rights due diligence (HRDD) and considers what needs to change in the future to better connect corporate human rights analysis to positive outcomes for rightsholders. It first looks at the normative and methodological drivers for inclusion of human rights in the impact assessment space and examines the broadening definition of human rights in the context of impact assessment. It then considers the implementation of HRIAs and integrated ESIA-HRIAs. Then it explores the bifurcation of HRDD into separate impact assessment (IA) and risk management spheres. It culminates with a forward-looking examination of pitfalls, challenges, and opportunities for the HRDD field.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

While social impact assessment (SIA) dates back to the 1970s, human rights impact assessment (HRIA) is comparatively new to the business space. The first key statements about the role of business and human society appeared in the 1990s and gained traction with the launch of the UN Global Compact and the ‘Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights’, which governed how self-selecting extractive companies cooperated with government and civil society to begin managing the human rights implications of their site security protocols. The role of companies in respecting human rights has become increasingly clear and comprehensive over the past two decades. Security assessments were merged with conflict-risk assessments, whose concerns dovetailed with Indigenous rights risks and artisanal mining risk assessments (Ballentine, 2007). At the time, the public sector had advanced concepts for health impact assessment that were taken up by development finance institutions for corporate infrastructure investments (Hunt & MacNaughton, 2006). Noting the clear links between gender rights and human rights, gender-sensitive human rights assessment methodologies were also advanced (Bakker et al., 2009). The result was an ecosystem of impact assessments for an array of topics that had become clearly interlinked with corporate activities (DeWinter-Schmitt & Salcito, 2019).

The incorporation of human rights into the suite of assessments was seen by some as an opportunity to lend moral and legal legitimacy to the impact assessment processes that had been implemented unevenly under domestic legal frameworks (MacNaughton & Hunt, 2012). Leading SIA practitioners and theorists had long argued that SIA should consider human rights (Vanclay, 2003). As the UNGP were drafted and launched between 2005 and 2011, the perspective of these practitioners was widely validated (Kemp & Vanclay, 2013; Vanclay et al., 2015; Götzmann et al., 2016). Financial institutions underwriting infrastructure projects almost universally aligned their environmental and social risk assessment and management system requirements to include ‘potential adverse human rights impacts’. They mandated that clients conduct ‘due diligence’ to ‘respect human rights’ (IFC, 2012). Integrated impact assessment, covering social, cultural, economic, health, environmental, and human rights impacts, is now an expectation laid out by investors and corporate policy documents alike (Esteves et al., 2012). By 2013, the majority of Europe’s largest companies had already committed to respecting human rights and conducting HRDD (Salcito et al., 2015b). Since then, the numbers have continued to grow, accelerated by the human rights expectations in the updated *OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises* (OECD, 2011), the Performance Standards of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) (IFC, 2012) and other development institutions, and the HRDD commitments of all Equator Principles banks (Ruggie et al., 2021).

EVOLUTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT ASSESSMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF LARGE-FOOTPRINT PROJECTS

Despite their good intent, the practical outcomes of corporate human rights commitments remain unclear. The established HRIA processes were offered as guidance, and were not rooted in legal, normative expectations. Although government bodies worldwide oversee ESIA processes, they have generally not allocated resources to vet the human rights assertions of projects or hire staff with human rights expertise (Kahangirwe & Vanclay, 2022).

Nevertheless, Ruggie and others have set some guardrails for minimum standards for HRIA, which are being adopted and expounded by soft law governance bodies. For example, the OECD (2011) adopted Ruggie's (2007, p. 6) conception that 'HRIA should not be merely an additional section in an ESIA, or an ESIA reorganized under different headings. Rather, grounding an impact assessment in the human rights framework implies a different approach'. In its Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, the OECD (2011) articulated the need for this different approach to include meaningful stakeholder engagement with vulnerable and marginalized populations as well as community leaders and civil society. This expectation is also codified in the environmental and social performance standards of most (if not all) multilateral development banks and multistakeholder initiatives, such as the Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil, Rainforest Alliance, ResponsibleSteel, and the Aluminium Stewardship Initiative.

While regulatory frameworks overseeing HRIA have stalled, a methodological consensus has solidified in practitioner circles. The Danish Institute for Human Rights began convening practitioners to develop a publicly available and consensus-based methodology through a series of meetings, calls, and exchanges. The result was a Guidance and Toolbox that teased out the unique features of assessment processes for human rights (DIHR, 2020). The DIHR also provided guidance for integrating human rights into ESIA (DIHR, 2013). The DIHR advocated use of a 'human rights lens', which enabled vulnerable rightsholders to be prioritized. The DIHR approach has had much buy-in from practitioners, industry, and policy-makers (BSR, 2013; Salcito et al., 2014; Esteves et al., 2017; van der Ploeg & Vanclay, 2017).

Alongside stand-alone HRIAs, examples of human rights being integrated into ESIA were often reported. However, few became public documents. Kemp and Vanclay (2013) articulated the conceptual and operational challenges that had already emerged in efforts to integrate human rights into SIA. When ESIA is a permitting document submitted to host-country government agencies, the inclusion of human rights has been problematic. Government offices are not, as noted above, staffed with human rights experts who can meaningfully vet the quality of the assessments submitted to them. Additionally, because HRIA must identify a baseline human rights context to evaluate the risk that corporate activities could exacerbate, contribute to or benefit from adverse existing conditions, the process, of necessity, identifies weaknesses in state protection, promotion and fulfillment of human rights in the project area. In particular, this process often pays specific attention to vulnerable and marginalized groups that the state knowingly and willfully marginalizes. In Kenya, Tullow Oil carried out an HRIA in the ethnic minority region of the Turkana people, which it reportedly refused to call an HRIA for fear of offending the government by recognizing Turkana peoples' rights. In neighboring Uganda, the Executive Director of the National Environmental Management Agency serves at the pleasure of the President, who has made oilfield development a national priority. Assessors, activists, and civil servants have perceived that the President views delays, criticisms, or prioritization of concerns about the oil development as contrary to state goals (Kahangirwe & Vanclay, 2022). Indeed, the President has used the State of the Nation speeches to decry detractors and community advocates protesting oil development as 'economic saboteurs' (Akumu, 2013).

In addition to the political and cultural challenges of integrating HRIA into ESIA, there are also logistical challenges. In some cases, the timelines of ESIA's obstructed effective completion of HRIA tasks. In Uganda, the oil and gas major, TotalEnergies, intended to produce a comprehensive, integrated environmental, social, and human rights impact assessment. The final document, published in 2021, subsumed human rights under a sub-chapter on stakeholder

engagement within the SIA. TotalEnergies commissioned an entirely separate HRIA, having apparently struggled to integrate the timelines and logistical demands of the two processes.

Despite having proactively established HRDD requirements, development banks demonstrate limited implementation of these expectations, especially in rights-restrictive contexts (Sarfaty, 2012). A recent review of the IFC's portfolio (Salcito, 2021) found that Indigenous rights are omitted from analysis where host-country law restricts Indigenous protections. Also, of 1,010 investments made between 2012 and 2020, the IFC only rarely implemented protection of Indigenous Peoples' right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), despite financing over 100 operations on Indigenous territories. More alarmingly, the IFC never conducted any human rights due diligence in \$500m worth of investments in four companies operating directly in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, all made while a genocide was underway (2016–2020) (Murphy et al., 2022). Likewise, the IFC has never made consideration for restrictions on religious freedoms in Myanmar, even as the Burmese government carried out a genocide against the Muslim Rohingya population (Salcito, 2021).

A limitation to the integration of human rights into ESIA is the dearth of human rights expertise within ESIA consulting firms. While there are groups that have actively recruited seasoned human rights experts, human rights expertise is not a consistent feature of study teams for integrated environmental, social and human rights impact assessments. Given such an array of circumstances limiting implementation of HRDD, whether or how to integrate human rights into other due diligence and assessment processes has become a matter of choice for companies (DeWinter-Schmitt & Salcito, 2019). Business enterprises have argued that the decision to conduct detailed human rights analysis is context and activity dependent (Kemp & Vanclay, 2013). The IFC has codified limits on broad HRDD, describing it as necessary only 'in limited high-risk circumstances' (IFC, 2012, PS1 fn12).

Allowing companies to decide when and how to conduct HRDD has not been successful in safeguarding human rights. To illustrate this, let's consider the mining company, Rio Tinto. Rio Tinto (2013) had stated that it normally integrates human rights into social risk analysis and impact assessment unless high-risk situations warrant a stand-alone human rights assessment. Two prominent cases reveal that Rio Tinto has not been true to this policy. First, in early 2020, Rio Tinto's human rights webpage read: *We are proud of the way we partner with Indigenous people across our global operational footprint*. Despite such a statement, in May 2020 it destroyed the Juukan Gorge ancestral caves of the Indigenous PKKP people, despite their strong opposition and being totally inconsistent with its policies. Second, even though in receipt of IFC financing (and therefore a need to comply with IFC performance standards), Rio Tinto did not conduct a stand-alone HRDD of its Simandou operation in Guinea. The project's 200-odd page ESIA only included 15 lines regarding labor violations as its discussion of human rights. However, the situation in Guinea was highly complex, as evidenced by severe election-linked violence in 2013 (Radden Keefe, 2013) and a military coup in September 2021 (Benderev, 2021), and it is clear that this site should have been seen as a high-risk situation. In fact, despite the claim that they would conduct a stand-alone human rights assessment in high-risk situations, Rio Tinto has never published a stand-alone human rights assessment (DeWinter-Schmitt & Salcito, 2019). Of interest, as part of a July 2021 agreement with impacted communities, Rio Tinto now has to produce one for its long-closed Panguna mine on Bougainville, Papua New Guinea (HRLC, 2021).

THE PROBLEM OF DUE DILIGENCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

At the same time that barriers to conducting rights-inclusive ESAs and stand-alone HRAs were manifesting, easier processes were being advocated, focusing on ‘reporting about’ HRDD, rather than publishing the investigations themselves. This aligns with risk management and legal compliance approaches, which are also opaque owing to the sensitivity of the content they address. The business and human rights community did not immediately push back against this approach; confidentiality is a compelling argument made by corporate actors against transparency and disclosure. Former members of Ruggie’s team established a ‘Reporting and Assurance Framework’ (RAFI) in 2016 to track the advancement of policy commitments, outcomes of risk evaluations, and monitoring plans (SHIFT, 2016). Over 150 companies were included in their database. Yet, after initial enthusiasm, its stewards began questioning whether companies were cherry-picking in their reporting, and whether the information could be meaningfully used by investors and other stakeholders (SHIFT, 2017a). RAFI stewards expressed concern that corporate human rights commitments were not being demonstrably converted into actions or provoking change for rightsholders (SHIFT, 2016, 2017b). The RAFI ceased updating its content in 2019 without explanation.

The RAFI project helped shed light on the difference between human rights and other topics of ‘due diligence’. Unlike financial records, human rights issues cannot be validated by cross-checking two sets of documentation. They require the input of rightsholders themselves, making HRDD an inherently field-based activity. But, because enterprise risks are managed confidentially by companies, there is no capacity or pathway for risk managers to engage with external stakeholders and rightsholders. Although HRDD is consistently framed by established international human rights, investigation of impacts on those rights must be iteratively tailored to circumstances and individuals, meaning that no single pre-established set of research questions can be considered to universally address all risks in all contexts (Salcito & Wielga, 2018). These realities make HRDD fundamentally, substantively, and procedurally different from financial due diligence, compliance audits, and other risk management processes.

The field of enterprise risk management has sought to merge human rights risks with business risks. Human rights risks and broader social risks are internalized as ‘non-technical risks’ when it is understood that social conditions could impact the company (Esteves et al., 2017; Mares, 2019). Advocacy efforts around human rights risks have sought to present a business case for respecting rights. Franks et al. (2014) reviewed 50 cases of corporate–community conflict and found that conflict can cost operators up to \$20 million per week. They concluded that companies are willing to take action to reduce the social and environmental risks to communities and to themselves when they understand the financial implications and business risk of conflict (Franks et al., 2014). The positioning of human rights within risk management framework has reinforced that human rights respect should increase net profits.

Kemp et al. (2016) noted that preventing human rights impacts can be financially costly. This is problematic in the context of risk management, which calculates economic costs and benefits, but has no mechanism for recognizing that the high cost of a mitigation cannot excuse the commission of a human rights violation. Operators that do not see a financial benefit to proposed human rights risk mitigation measures are likely to reject the proposed actions. Kemp et al. referred to occasions where human rights risk mitigation is seen as worthwhile as enterprise risk ‘rebound’. The term refers to situations where human rights risks rebound

as enterprise risks, most commonly in the form of conflict. By the time active conflict breaks out, however, the human rights impacts have been underway for months or years (sometimes decades). What is more, communities with little ability to conduct disruptive protests will rarely generate business risks, even if they experience severe adverse effects on their rights.

There is now a robust body of evidence documenting the gap between human rights exigencies and existing approaches in risk management. Two case studies (Barrick Porgera and Rio Tinto Juukan Gorge), described below, exemplify the need for rightsholder-driven processes for understanding and addressing human rights risks that are distinct from risk management or *ex-post* remediation.

Barrick Porgera

The Barrick gold mine in Porgera, Papua New Guinea, experienced nearly 20 years of complaints before the community received advocacy support from Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. This support triggered an internal investigation wherein Barrick confirmed that security contractors had been systematically raping women on the site since at least 1990 (Albin-Lackey, 2010). Barrick sought to remedy the abuses through a compensation mechanism, which inadvertently sowed divisions in the community, and left open the question of remedy for other abuses, such as extrajudicial killings, environmental degradation, livelihood impacts, and violent forced evictions. Barrick commissioned a study of ongoing human rights risks in 2018 that confirmed the presence of approximately 820 outstanding grievances and potentially dozens more that had not been filed. Barrick would normally be expected to respond to all those complaints and ‘know and show’ that harms had been remedied. However, Barrick did not publish a follow-up, but appealed to the government to renew its mining license in exchange for generous financial contributions (Bristow, 2020). Community groups evoked unremedied harms in explicit human rights language, including the ongoing adverse impacts experienced by the mine’s dumping of tailings directly into local watersheds, and the risks of livestock being washed away by a flood of tailings or being run over by a mine vehicle (Akali Tange Association et al., 2020). The violent assaults were not the sole human rights violations underway at Porgera, and their elimination did not remedy other persistent harms. Nevertheless, Barrick primarily focused on its financial contributions to local governments, overlooking its broader human rights responsibilities.

Rio Tinto Juukan Gorge

In May 2020, Rio Tinto Iron blasted two ancient rock shelters at Juukan Gorge in the Pilbara Region of Western Australia. These were owned by the Puutu Kunti Kurrama people and the Pinikura people (together known as the PKKP peoples). This act of destruction provoked a global outcry that ultimately ousted much of Rio Tinto’s C-Suite and triggered a strengthening in regional mining laws and corporate practices that reverberated worldwide. The significance of the Juukan Gorge shelters was long known to Rio Tinto. An Australian Senate Inquiry (JSCNA, 2021) into the destruction found that Rio knew of their high archaeological significance as early as October 2008 and realized by July 2014 that the shelters held some of the oldest-known human artifacts in the world, dating back over 40,000 years. In August 2014, the PKKP peoples, in collaboration with archaeologists, began efforts to publicly demonstrate the importance of the site, developing a documentary and conducting archaeological salvage

actions. The PKKP peoples begged to visit the site in May 2020, but were denied. The caves were blasted weeks later. Global attention on the Juukan Gorge destruction has emphasized the archaeological losses, which were, scientifically, a marvel. But they were also a spiritual marvel (Kooklmatrie, 2020). The 2013 excavations identified artifacts that had been part of PKKP lore for generations and that the PKKP people feared had been lost during massacres in preceding generations (PKKP, 2020). PKKP reported that the artifacts ‘physically and spiritually make the connection between the old times and the present’ (PKKP, 2020, p. 33). As Rio Tinto’s risk management could quantify the value of high-grade ore but not the value of irreplaceable cultural heritage, the blasting proceeded without any clear sense within the company that deliberate human rights violations were occurring in the pursuit of profit. Rio Tinto had no framework for seeing the human rights of the PKKP people as inviolable within its risk management system.

The outcry over Juukan triggered a worldwide re-evaluation of policies on Indigenous peoples among mining companies (Kemp et al., 2023). How this attention will affect Indigenous populations is unclear. Indigenous voices have not been amplified in the press releases associated with new Indigenous peoples policies, and net economic benefits remain quantifiable, while spiritual values are not; yet a shared analytical process of risk management is expected to cover both (Aravind, 2020). Companies want to avoid ‘the next Juukan Gorge’, yet continue to fail to appreciate the significance of Indigenous cultural heritage they have in their property portfolios.

EVOLVING NORMATIVE FRAMEWORKS

Despite the fact that the business and human rights movement was aware of the inadequacy of existing methods for corporate risk calculation, reporting, and remedy, new developments in the field of business and human rights have not, to date, tackled these core issues. Hinging on the reporting language written into the UNGP, a slew of mandatory HRDD laws implemented in various countries rely on risk evaluation and self-reporting, rather than transparency about identified human rights impacts and mitigation measures at site level. There are now several laws that define corporate HRDD expectations in legalistic concepts of risk management, rather than in the rigorous, evidence-rooted processes of impact assessment (see Table 15.1).

Examples of the chasm between self-reported human rights risks and rightsholder experiences of harm were described above. Studies of the new mandatory HRDD laws confirm that these self-reporting frameworks are limited. The California, UK, and Australian supply chain due diligence laws ostensibly aimed to eliminate human trafficking and modern slavery, but they required no remedies. Companies could disclose that they made no efforts at all to identify or halt modern slavery practices, but as long as they reported this, they were compliant. In a systematic review of disclosures by 105 garment companies operating under the California law, Birkey et al. (2018) found that disclosures were more ‘symbolic than substantive’ and that there was limited meaningful social disclosure. Schaper and Pollach (2021) had similar conclusions in an analysis of the UK modern slavery law. Reviewing 183 statements from 70 companies, they found that the statements rarely described risks or realities of modern slavery in their operations and value chains (Monciardini et al., 2019). Schaper and Pollach (2021) found that the vast majority of companies (87 percent) did not report whether modern slavery cases were identified in their supply chains or if corrective action plans were put in place. Like

Table 15.1 Examples of laws mandating corporate human rights due diligence

	Affected Firms	Addressed Rights	Expectations under Law	Scope of DD	Sanction
California Transparency in Supply Chains Act (2010) ^a	>\$100m	Modern slavery (undefined)	Disclose efforts or non-efforts	Supply Chain	Injunction to file a report, no penalty
UK Modern Slavery Act (2015) ^b	>£36m	Trafficking, slavery, child labor	Disclose efforts or non-efforts	Supply Chain	Injunction to file a report, no penalty
France Duty of Vigilance Law (<i>Loi Devoir de Vigilance</i>) (2017) ^c	>5000 ppl	Health, Safety, Environment, 'human rights and fundamental freedoms'	Vigilance Plan, monitoring	Company & Supply Chain	Civil suit or agency action
Australia Modern Slavery Act (2018) ^d	>\$100m	Modern slavery (undefined), Trafficking, Child Labor	Disclose efforts or non-efforts	Supply Chain	Injunction to file a report, no penalty
Norway Act on Business Transparency & Fundamental Human Rights and Decent Work (2021) (<i>åpenhetsloven</i>) ^e	>NOK 70m revenues >50 ppl	International Bill of Rights; ILO Fundamental Rights at Work	Due diligence disclosure; Responsive to info requests	Company & Supply Chain	Injunctions to file a report, fines and fees
Germany Act on Corporate Due Diligence Obligations for the Prevention of Human Rights Violations in Supply Chains (<i>Lieferkettensorgfaltspflichtengesetz</i>) (2021)	>3000 ppl	Environment, Labor, Indigenous, Land, Security	Regular due diligence, documenting & reporting, remedy of harms, grievance mechanism	Company & Supply Chain	Agency action, fines and fees

Notes:

^a <https://oag.ca.gov/SB657>^b <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/contents/enacted>^c <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000034290626/>^d <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2018A00153>^e <https://stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Vedtak/Beslutninger/Lovvedtak/2020-2021/vedtak-202021-176/>

the California Act, the Australian law allowed firms to define modern slavery (Wray-Bliss & Michelson, 2022). Consequently, suppliers holding workers in conditions that qualify as forced labor under international law have continued to supply goods to Australian firms (Xu et al., 2020).

The weaknesses of assessment requirements in those laws persist in France's Duty of Vigilance law. Although it requires companies to establish 'measures to identify and prevent risks that can have serious impacts on human rights', the focus on risk rather than impact affects its real-world application. Companies have used the distinction to restrict their responsibilities. Telecom giant Orange, for example, never engaged with telecom users to evaluate its impacts on them. It scoped its risk evaluation only to risks in France, even though the company operates across much of Francophone Africa and Eastern Europe (Orange, 2019). This approach does not reflect human rights realities. For example, Orange operates in Cameroon, where the military government shut down the internet more frequently than in any other African state. One would expect a vigilant telecommunications company to evaluate

risks of complicity in government abuses in such a context, but these considerations were not included in Orange's risk evaluation (CIPESA, 2017). Oil and gas major TotalEnergies scoped its reporting under the French law to exclude evaluation of actual human rights impacts. When Oxfam conducted field research and identified adverse impacts on Ugandan citizens, the NGO argued that TotalEnergies was required to assess risks and prevent associated human rights violations (Akoli Atine et al., 2020). However, in its formal response, TotalEnergies noted that French law merely required it to establish 'reasonable measures to identify and prevent risks that can have serious impacts on human rights and the environment resulting from its activities.' TotalEnergies' response to Oxfam implies no expectation that it would prevent or remedy abuses. TotalEnergies believes it must only 'prevent risks'; once risks become realities, TotalEnergies sees no articulation in the French law of any duty to act.

There is a gap between evaluation of risk on the one side, and investigation of harm on the other, especially in cases where risk evaluation is not fit-for-purpose and fails to identify risks before they become harms. It is in this gap that assessment of actual and potential impacts should be located, not only to use evidence-based methods for duly diligent investigation of potential harms to rightsholders, but to inform mechanisms for preventing or reversing harms. As demonstrated by the existing mandatory HRDD laws (Table 15.1), risk assessment as currently conceptualized does not include site-based engagement with affected individuals or operations-level evaluation of human rights conditions. But human rights harms are almost never one-off events; they are the culmination of accumulating slights and impacts (United Nations, 2011). Without a process for proactively identifying rightsholders and evaluating the potential adverse impacts they may experience, the enterprise risk approach will fail to identify human rights risks in time to prevent abuses. Companies seeking to comply with these laws are not inherently seeking to eliminate human rights violations, because the laws do not mandate that they do so (DeWinter-Schmitt & Salcito, 2019).

In 2021, Germany and Norway passed HRDD laws that are, like their predecessors, limited by their emphasis on risk assessment. However, they also lay out additional requirements that could result in substantially heightened protections for rightsholders. Specifically, they expect investigation and disclosures regarding alleged or identified human rights impacts. They also mandate mechanisms for fielding human rights allegations and remedy for harms. The German law has not been implemented at the time of writing, and the Norwegian law has not been tested in court, but they offer the greatest potential to date for meaningfully enforcing the corporate responsibility to respect human rights.

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE? WAYS FORWARD

Evolving legal frameworks for HRDD should have as their stated aim the prevention and remediation of harms. This will involve three key adjustments. First, a reframing of HRDD away from risks and back towards impacts. Second, the implementing agencies of mandatory HRDD laws must have the capacity to review and quality-control the due diligence processes and HRIAs produced. Finally, government oversight needs to secure remedies for rightsholders from companies for harms, regardless of whether corporate plans and processes appear to be consistent with the law. Accountability to rightsholders is a defining characteristic of effective mandatory HRDD. These changes to mandatory HRDD are elaborated below.

Reorienting Human Rights Due Diligence away from Risk Management and towards Impact Management

In contrast to the ‘prevention of risks’ that characterizes first-generation mandatory HRDD laws, the stated aim of HRDD should be the prevention and remediation of human rights harms. The ‘risk prevention’ approach is inadequate because there are no rigorous established methodologies against which the adequacy of ‘risk assessment’ and ‘risk audit’ can be evaluated. The inadequacies in the methods would only become apparent after an impact occurred. Given that, if an impact occurred that was not foreseen in the risk assessment, a company could argue that it had successfully mitigated all known risks and that this impact was unrelated to the identified risks (e.g. as in the TotalEnergies Uganda response to Oxfam); such a procedure is not acceptable. Shifting from risk to impact prevention involves a reframing of HRDD away from risk management and back towards impact assessment.

Just as ESIA demands an Environmental and Social Monitoring System (ESMS), HRDD laws should include a human rights monitoring system. Management systems should be situated in an array of corporate functions, but will necessarily report to an established position for engaging directly with affected rightsholders in the workforce and affected communities. At corporate and operations levels, there is a lack of implementers of the findings from HRDD and HRIA – ESIA can be converted into actionable ESMS tasks by the Community Relations and Environmental departments, but the cross-cutting nature of human rights necessitates high levels of collaboration among all departments in a project’s organizational structure. Companies have not yet modified their organizational charts to accommodate human rights commitments (Johnston & Kemp, 2019).

Assuring Government Capacity to Evaluate the Adequacy of Human Rights Due Diligence

Current mandatory HRDD laws place requirements on companies operating internationally to report to their home-country government. This is distinct from existing environmental protection laws, which are implemented by host states. Although ESIAs are evaluated by host states, HRIAs and HRDD cannot be effectively folded into permitting documents submitted to host states in contexts where human rights are not universally protected, promoted, and fulfilled. As such, it is appropriate that current mandatory HRDD laws are implemented (and thus corporate HRDD is evaluated) by the home states of the parent companies. However, home states must go further to strengthen the capacity of departments tasked to review HRDD.

At present, government personnel lack the expertise to evaluate the adequacy of human rights reporting. Just as Environmental Protection Agencies are staffed with air, water, soil, climate, conservation, biodiversity, and other specialists, mandatory HRDD oversight agencies should be staffed with labor, gender, Indigenous, security, economic/social/cultural and civil/political rights experts. Impacts, or harms, cannot be assessed through compliance audits, which typically only consider whether appropriate procedures were followed (Ford & Nolan, 2020). Auditors can be trained to review documentation and conduct worker interviews, but currently there are no validated processes for auditing impacts within communities. Also, the level of engagement needed to validate human rights claims would be too lengthy to fit within an audit process, and the needed competencies are not present in audit firms. An ongoing debate about the auditability of mandatory HRDD already characterizes discussions of new

and pending due diligence laws (Ula, 2019). At root, the challenge lies at the distinction between risk and impact: while a mandatory HRDD risk management plan can indeed be audited and benchmarked against standards for managing risks, a mandatory HRDD impact management plan can only be audited if the actual/potential impacts themselves are audited.

Governments also currently lack frameworks for evaluating the adequacy of HRDD. However, the Danish Institute for Human Rights' Guidance and Toolbox (DIHR, 2020) includes a framework for evaluation, which emphasizes the importance of rightsholder participation in the evaluation, development of recommendations, and monitoring processes. Thus, human rights reporting should document: (1) how corporations identify harms on a site by site basis; (2) which harms they identified; (3) what actions they have taken to remedy the harms; and (4) how affected populations perceive and experience those efforts. Effective HRDD will involve an assessment process at the operational level, scoped to rightsholders rather than to fence lines or legal boundaries. It will include downstream and downgradient populations and roadside populations where applicable, and shared users of natural resources.

Prioritizing Remedies for Harms, Going beyond Penalties for Abuses

Government oversight needs to penalize inadequate assessment as well as inadequate mitigation and management of actual and potential human rights impacts. This is a major shift from the typical IA process, which first accounts for impacts, then evaluates the costs of mitigation, and then generates compromise. These compromises work differently with human rights, because conditions that violate rights are not acceptable or tenable under international frameworks. Corporations cannot allow acceptable levels of human rights abuses – any human rights violation, regardless of how costly the mitigation, must be prevented and/or remedied. It also necessitates analysis of structural inequalities and human rights risks in an operating context and industry, so that the drivers for adverse human rights outcomes are not exacerbated by company activity.

Mares (2018, 2019) called for attention to the 'root causes of harm' and advocated for 'reduction at source'. 'Reduction at source' was originally devised as a pollution prevention approach in the 1980s. Scientists realized that rather than attempting to cure or mitigate harms, the environmental and health hazards would be better prevented through management strategies instigated well before the harms occurred. This is generally known as the 'prevention principle'. In production process, there are four main approaches by which companies can reduce harm: manufacturing changes; equipment changes; product reformulations or substitutions; and improved industrial housekeeping (PPRC, 2015). Also, companies should look backwards in their production chains and identify the original sources of harm. Companies should eliminate harmful substances from their processes, and overhaul their maintenance schedules to achieve pollution reductions. To halt and prevent harms that might appear years later, a parallel for human rights would involve: overhauling human resources where discrimination is identified; substantially re-scaled operations where Indigenous land stewards reject proposed industrial activity; and structural changes to how companies do business.

CONCLUSION

Since the United Nations (2011) *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights*, there has been a diversification of approaches to HRIA and HRDD, and legislative changes to encourage greater commitment to respect for human rights. It is also clear that there are limitations to the risk management approach of managing risks to rightsholders. Something is wrong if companies can claim compliance with the law when they fail to adequately assess and address the actual human rights impacts experienced by rightsholders. Without a drastic shift towards accountability to affected rightsholders, mandatory HRDD legislation potentially perpetuates impunity for companies that cause, contribute to, and/or benefit from the violation of human rights. Mandatory HRDD must ensure meaningful engagement of vulnerable, marginalized and other rightsholders (SHIFT & OHCHR, 2021). Moving beyond ‘naming and shaming’ will also take a genuine commitment by companies to identify the real-world impacts of their operations on human rights, and to address them regardless of the cost. The tools for undertaking HRDD are available to guide regulatory oversight and the corporate implementation of HRDD, and therefore there is no excuse for projects to contribute to human rights harms in affected communities.

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16. Gender, intersectionality and Indigenous rights in social impact assessment

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INTRODUCTION

Impact assessment is usually associated with the approval process and environmental licensing of resource development and major projects. While much research has highlighted the lack of assessment of gender issues in impact assessment, there have also been advances in this area (Lahiri-Dutt & Ahmad, 2011; Hill et al., 2017; Gibson et al., 2017; Walker et al., 2019; Stienstra et al., 2020; Levac et al., 2021; Sax et al., 2021; Bala-Miller et al., 2022). Unfortunately, gender is still not always considered in impact assessment (Dempsey et al., 2022). Indigenous advocacy organizations have suggested that the failure to meaningfully incorporate the social and gendered impacts of resource development in impact assessments is a structurally violent process. This is the case despite evidence of the gendered division of labour and the disproportionate burden on women who end up doing a statistically greater amount of domestic labour associated with major projects (Lahiri-Dutt & Ahmad, 2011). There is also increasing work that recognises gender diversity and the impacts of resource development and major projects on Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer and Two Spirited peoples (LGBTQ2S+) peoples (see <https://lgbtqhealth.ca/community/two-spirit.php>). Social Impact Assessment (SIA) and the gendered dimensions of projects also interconnect with the topics of Indigenous rights, including land rights and title, colonialism, and its associated genocide (MMIWG, 2019).

Women and gender-diverse peoples are subject to the gendered implications of camps, such as increased gender violence, especially when camps are in rural and remote areas where resource extraction takes place (Stienstra et al., 2016). There is also significant research that explores the impacts of resource extraction on men and masculinities (Landry, 2017; Ey, 2018). Work on gender and SIA builds on feminist analysis of labour and gender-based violence to assess the breadth of gendered impacts relevant in project appraisal and impact assessment. These analyses are often divorced from issues of race and racialisation as well as ableism. Serious issues relating to violence against women including 'missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls' (MMIWG) remain unaddressed within normative impact assessment theory and practice, as does examination of gender outside the gender binary (Martignoni & Umlas, 2018; Farrales et al., 2021; Dempsey et al., 2022).

In this chapter, we explore barriers and opportunities for overcoming obstacles to improve gendered analyses in SIA. We do so with an emphasis on resource extraction and development industries, primarily in Canada, and with a thematic undercurrent that examines issues that are difficult and sensitive – often deemed *too hard* – such as gender-violence and the findings of Canada's *National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* (MMIWG, 2019). Given the documented violence against Indigenous women and girls, and domestic and sexual violence in territories with natural resource extraction (Martignoni

& Umlas, 2018; Götzmann et al., 2019; Alsalem, 2022; Wickham, 2022), we argue that our findings from Canada are applicable around the world.

When gender is considered in impact assessment, it is largely done on an ad hoc basis (Hoogeveen et al., 2021; Sax et al., 2021; Dempsey et al., 2022). There is no established international guidance that informs how to perform gender impact assessment, although there are critical resources on SIA that identify gender as a key area of inquiry (e.g. Esteves et al., 2012). This lack of standardisation is partly because every community, project proposal, and impact assessment is different. However, there are guidance documents, including in Canada, where, in the Impact Assessment Act 2019, it is now required to take gender into account (Canada, 2019). Tools to perform gendered assessments of impacts are increasingly advanced (Lahiri-Dutt, 2011; Hill et al., 2017; Stienstra et al., 2020; Levac et al., 2021; Sax et al., 2021).

Intersectionality is a broad concept, and is a theory and method that informs gender analysis in impact assessment (Stienstra et al., 2020; Hoogeveen et al., 2021). Intersectionality is an approach to gender and diversity that originated from the significant work of Kimberlé Crenshaw (2017), and is essentially about addressing structural forms of oppression. The Danish Institute for Human Rights, Oxfam, KAIROS, Amnesty International, and the Geneva Academy are amongst the many organisations working to address gender equity through implementation of a gendered analysis of human rights issues, including in relation to corporate social responsibility and resource extraction. This critical work on gender and human rights has largely been to promote the equity and human rights of women and men. Yet, there are increasing understandings of how gender, and male/female or man/woman binaries, are inadequate to fully understand gender identity and oppression. LGBTQ2S+ rights and the 'axes of oppression and difference' faced by LGBTQ2S+ peoples are central to discussions of gender, diversity, and intersectionality.

Improved mainstream understandings of sex and gender are facilitating better recognition of rights for LGBTQ2S+ individuals and populations that recognise the oppression and sexism gender-diverse peoples face. Issues of gender-based violence and toxic masculinities within workplaces exist in the resource extraction industry, with gender and diversity having been largely ignored in environmental regulatory debate, including in impact assessment (Landry, 2017; Ey, 2018; Farrales et al., 2021; Dempsey et al., 2022). There remains a gap in SIA to meaningfully integrate gender analysis and address the rights of populations that experience gendered systems of oppression. This significantly includes the gendered impacts of resource extraction projects during the onset of industrial camps, also referred to as 'man camps' (Sloan Morgan et al., 2021). Work that focuses specifically on LGBTQ2S+ populations in impact assessment is sparse. Although equity, diversity, inclusion, and intersectionality have become buzzwords in governance and regulatory arenas, meaningful implementation of them is increasingly important, including within SIA.

In this chapter, we do not go into detail around intersectional or feminist theory, but focus on the significance, challenges, and aspirations for implementation of gender in impact assessment, with an emphasis on advances and challenges to shedding light on how policy can be improved internationally and how practice still has a way to go to meaningfully incorporate and implement a gender lens in impact assessment. We also do not go into detail about race, racialisation, racism, socio-economic status, or ableism, which are other primary axes of difference that must be brought into consideration when doing meaningful work to address inequities in project approval processes and environmental licensing. What we do discuss is the application of gender-based analysis across jurisdictions, including the challenges of

implementing aspirational regulatory promises to promote change through a gendered and intersectional lens (Stienstra et al., 2020).

Both co-authors of this chapter live and work in unceded western Canada, where there is a documented history of the impacts of resource development and extraction on Indigenous women and girls. We'es Tes has been instrumental in advocating with and supporting MMIWG impacted families in northern British Columbia (Martin & Walia, 2019; RAVEN Trust, 2020). Hoogeveen collaborated with We'es Tes to take a two-eyed seeing approach to writing this chapter (Bartlett et al., 2012), invoking a 'we' voice, to weave together Indigenous thought with Western regulatory understandings. We intentionally draw on the 'walk softly' teaching approach. In Witsuwit'en culture, like many other Indigenous cultures, there is a teaching to recognise the interconnectedness of self in relation to kinship, peers, ancestors, *yintah* (land), plants, animals, and Udaggi (Creator). This relational approach shares the importance of taking care of these relationships as they nourish our body, mind, and spirit, and we in turn take care of the *yintah*, ancestors and kin (all beings) as best we can. Walking softly on the *yintah*, with each other and within ourselves, is to maintain being in good relations with one another for today and generations to come.

In drawing on the walk softly approach, we understand gender violence as both prominent and misunderstood, including and particularly in the SIA domain. In the final section of this chapter, we ground gaps and challenges in implementation by examining evidence over a court decision that demonstrates how difficult it is to bring meaningful analysis and mitigation implementation and planning about the gendered impacts of development to the fore in resource development and impact assessment decision-making. We demonstrate these challenges by examining the dismissal of a petition for a Judicial Review of the extension to a gas pipeline environmental assessment certificate by the government of British Columbia (Supreme Court of British Columbia, 2021). This case shows that, despite advances in policy, there remains a gap in implementation including the MMIWG inquiry findings. This gap is realised by a large number of Indigenous and environmental justice advocates calling for better legislation and policy in implementing gender in impact assessment, and for governments to live up to their commitments around human rights, free, prior and informed consent, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2017).

GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS IN IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Many practitioners and scholars have written about gender and diversity, including with respect to the Canadian federal Impact Assessment Act (Walker et al., 2019; Hoogeveen et al., 2021; Levac et al., 2021). While awareness of the gendered impacts of major projects is not new (Lahiri-Dutt & Ahmad, 2011), the expected response by governments, to incorporate a clause around gender into legislation, is long overdue in most jurisdictions. In Canada, gender has been included in federal policy in the form of a requirement for 'Gender Based Analysis', or GBA Plus, which Women and Gender Equality Canada (2022, online) describe as follows:

GBA Plus is an analytical process that provides a rigorous method for the assessment of systemic inequalities, as well as a means to assess how diverse groups of women, men, and gender-diverse people may experience policies, programs and initiatives. The 'plus' in GBA Plus acknowledges that GBA Plus is not just about differences between biological (sexes) and socio-cultural (genders). We all

have multiple characteristics that intersect and contribute to who we are. GBA Plus considers many other identity factors such as race, ethnicity, religion, age, and mental or physical disability, and how the interaction between these factors influences the way we might experience government policies and initiatives.

GBA Plus was a commitment made by the Canadian cabinet in 1995. However, it was not until 2019 that the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada included a clause on Sex and Gender in the federal Impact Assessment Act (Canada, 2019). The Impact Assessment Agency released a guidance document, *Guidance: Gender-Based Analysis Plus in Impact Assessment* (Canada, 2022), which aimed to help a range of audiences, including proponents and practitioners, to implement the Impact Assessment Act and its Section 22 commitment to take gender and other identity factors into account. This indicates that governments in the Global North are beginning to take seriously the significance of incorporating gender into impact assessment. However, the extent to which the intersections of sex and gender with other identity factors are considered is up to the federal impact assessment regulator and the Impact Assessment Agency.

GBA Plus is an analytical tool, not a specific set of prescribed methods. Community and project-appropriate methods are context specific, and proponents should provide a rationale for their methodologies, including reference to relevant literature, best practices, and input from affected communities. Best practices for application of GBA Plus in impact assessment include: use of multiple sources of information collected through methods that are flexible and responsive to community needs; identification of outcomes and measurement methods that reflect local knowledge; critical analysis about social roles, relationships, and relative power in communities, and intersections among these factors that create disparities, as well as inclusion of contextually explained statistics; and the use of best available evidence when data is missing or limited. The application of GBA Plus in mandated impact assessment processes is anticipated to improve initial analyses of social, economic, and health effects of projects, and to improve proponent understanding and mitigation strategies.

There are limitations to GBA Plus. Arguably it has little power in practice and has little credence in the field (MMIWG, 2019; Dempsey et al., 2022). Ultimately, the Minister or Governor in Council (the Canadian Crown Government) determine whether adverse effects of a project exist. GBA Plus informs the Minister about which specific subgroups are anticipated to be most affected. When the decision is made, the Minister issues a decision statement with conditions (possibly including mitigation measures highlighted by GBA Plus) that are within federal jurisdiction or are directly related to a federal decision. Other effects described by the impact assessment report that are outside federal jurisdiction may be addressed by provincial, territorial, or Indigenous jurisdictional partners, or voluntarily by proponents. In some cases, the federal government can work collaboratively with these partners to support mitigation efforts for impacts outside federal jurisdiction.

Quantitative methods, such as sex-disaggregated data (e.g. census data) and household surveys, are often used in baseline studies. However, while sex-disaggregated data is an important starting point, this is not enough. ‘Stopping at this point risks reifying categories and may also serve to reproduce inequalities when impacts are considered’ (Walker et al., 2019, p. 19). An overarching theme across gendered analysis in SIA is the need to develop and incorporate qualitative research methods (Götzmann et al., 2019). As seen in the methods recommended for incorporating GBA Plus into impact assessment in federal impact assessment in Canada, the use of qualitative methods is not guaranteed. Nevertheless, Canada’s

Guidance: Gender-Based Analysis Plus in Impact Assessment (Canada, 2022) can also be used in international jurisdictions.

A GROWING FIELD AND METHOD

There is a growing body of literature and practice on GBA Plus in Canada, and much information and analysis of data gaps internationally (Götzmann et al., 2019; Alsalem, 2022). In this section, we provide a brief summary of some key documents. In the nongovernmental organisation sphere, Amnesty International (2016), KAIROS (2015), Oxfam Canada (2021), and Hill et al. (2017), for example, have produced resource guides that provide critiques as well as solutions to the gendered impacts of industrial development. Hill et al. (2017) highlighted the need for extractive industries to undertake gender impact assessments. Their evidence clearly demonstrated that such industries impact women and men differently, with women predominantly bearing the burden of negative impacts. They pointed out that, as a tool to realise women's rights and gender equality, gender impact assessments can be used by proponents to better understand the gendered impacts of their operations on local communities, and to develop plans to avoid or mitigate negative outcomes. This is a critical starting point. Implementing gender impact assessments is also a means to realise transformative change and uphold industry commitments to sustainable development. Hill et al. (2017) highlighted the need to consider communities as heterogeneous units, requiring continuous acknowledgement of the differences in roles, rights, needs, interests, and asset ownership between women and men. Hill et al. (2017) included a framework for gender impact assessments that was specifically designed for the extractive industries, and can be tailored to the unique needs of each company. They emphasised the need to ground assessments in community engagement, draw on the strengths of local cultures, and to safeguard the rights and interests of women and men in affected communities, rather than to manage risks for the company.

Oxfam Canada (2021) highlighted further issues in assessing gender. Their report mentioned various high-level themes, including addressing skills and knowledge gaps, barriers to proponent-led processes, and participation. They also noted the misconceptions of proponents and regulators who consider that the assessment of gender issues is outside the scope of impact assessment. They also noted the broader context of colonisation, homophobia, ableism, and racism.

Another resource is provided by the Women's Earth Alliance & Native Youth Sexual Health Network (WEA-NYSHN, 2016), *Violence on the Land, Violence on our Bodies*, which was informed by the experiences of Indigenous women and young people who were negatively impacted by extractive industries operating on their lands. This work defined 'environmental violence as the disproportionate and often devastating impacts that the conscious and deliberate proliferation of environmental toxins and industrial development (including extraction, production, export and release) have on Indigenous women, children and future generations, without regard from States or corporations for their severe and ongoing harm' (WEA-NYSHN, 2016, p. 14). The emphasis on environmental violence shows a connection between biological reproductive effects, sexual violence, and land degradation in Indigenous territories. This resource is intended to assist Indigenous community members to guide youth and other affected peoples in workshops to identify land-body connections and experiences of environmental violence, as well as ways to develop and strengthen culturally safe and

nation-specific responses. Interviewees expressed the need to move away from circular responses to violence, which historically included legal and carceral approaches. Legal strategies are discussed along with their pros and cons. Consideration of legal mechanisms and their negative effects, as well as community-based strategies and the self-determination of Indigenous peoples over their bodies, lands, and nations, is useful when developing indicators for an inclusive and diverse gender-sensitive SIA process.

Without consideration of the cumulative cultural and social effects, industrial camps can perpetuate the systemic and historic factors that exacerbate patterns of violence in Indigenous communities. *Indigenous Communities and Industrial Camps: Promoting Healthy Communities in Settings of Industrial Change* (Gibson et al., 2017) reviewed the impacts and benefits of situating industrial camps near small communities. The report presented strategies for camps to be responsibly positioned in communities to alleviate the burden on Indigenous women and children. It included an inventory of strategies, policies, and programmes that outline roles and responsibilities for industries, agencies (government), and communities to mitigate issues of concern associated with camps. Key suggestions and specific actions were outlined to address the social, cultural, and environmental issues in camp settings through gender, Indigenous, and service delivery lenses to prevent the burden of adverse impacts falling disproportionately on Indigenous women and youth.

The final policy report reviewed is by the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC, 2020), *A Culturally Relevant Gender-Based Analysis (CRGBA) Starter Kit*, which established a mechanism to incorporate culture and gender perspectives into existing policy development processes. It was designed with acknowledgement that conventional processes need to include a cultural framing that reflects the past and present realities of colonial violence in Canada. Ultimately, NWAC builds on and critiques GBA Plus and emphasises a distinction-based approach that is fluid and enhances rights and increases accountability. NWAC is explicit about the racism underlying the gender violence associated with extractives industries. This gender violence was clearly indicated in the National Inquiry (MMIWG, 2019) and international reporting (Simonovic, 2019; Alsalem, 2022).

Along with the guidance and policy documents, there is the Canadian government's GBA Plus guidance document (Canada, 2022, online) that references Voisey's Bay inclusion of gender:

In the environmental impact statement (EIS) guidelines, the JRP [Joint Review Panel] required the proponent to provide all data disaggregated by age, gender, Indigenous status, and community. It also requested an explanation of how the proponent used research to identify project impacts on women. The JRP held separate technical hearings focused on women's issues. Numerous women and women's organizations delivered submissions and presentations. These submissions raised concerns about the mine's likely impacts on crime, substance abuse, gender-based violence, and access to country foods. Finally, in its report, the JRP made three recommendations related to women. The province ultimately adopted one recommendation, requiring proponents to develop a women's employment plan as a condition for mine approval. Requiring women's employment or diversity employment plans is now common practice for project approvals in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Other examples in the Canadian north include studies by Dalseg et al. (2018) and Cox and Mills (2015). In light of all this work, a deeper intersectional and culturally relevant engagement in SIA can be partially solved through intersectoral collaboration across differing actors, including not-for-profit groups that work directly at the intersection of sex, gender, and multiple axes of difference. Another point relevant to implementation is around the skills and

accreditation necessary to meaningfully conduct a gendered analysis within SIA. Three key competencies noted from the Canadian guidance include:

- broad knowledge of cultural sensitivity, safety, and humility;
- understanding of best practices for collecting sensitive data confidentially and of community-based research methods; and
- flexibility in adapting methods and practices to the community and cultural context.

Despite all these toolkits, resources, and guidance documents, the gendered impacts of resource development persist and are often ignored or downplayed in project assessment (Dempsey et al., 2022). Time will tell whether the implementation of the GBA Plus guidance in Canada will make a difference, especially given political shifts in government and slow implementation.

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION

While there are increasing numbers of policy reports, academic synthesis pieces, and case studies, because each project is unique and due to the barriers to implementation, application of GBA Plus has been uneven. Even in jurisdictions with so-called best practices in policy, the track record of analysing gender is poor (Dempsey et al., 2022). Gender, and particularly gender violence, is a subject that is often regarded as being *too hard* to discuss. Difficulty in discussing gender violence is also the case with regulators and practitioners, with many environmental impact statements being skewed towards quantitative data (Walker et al., 2019). Notes about the implementation of GBA Plus dovetail with scholarship advocating the need for improvement in public participation and forward thinking, towards a ‘next generation’ of impact assessment (Sinclair et al., 2022a, 2022b). Problems around assessing gender equity, and accounting for and mitigating gender violence, are not going to be solved through quantitative disaggregated data alone, nor just by describing baseline demographics. Much more is needed to fully understand the context of any project, for example by including a narrative history of the past experiences of the local community.

Canada’s *National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* makes clear links between resource extraction and MMIWG. The ‘calls for justice’ in the report are also directed to improving impact assessment and all components of project appraisal (MMIWG, 2019; Hoogeveen et al., 2021). With British Columbia having the largest number of MMIWG (Martin & Walia, 2019), the need for GBA Plus and intersectional guidance is especially pronounced, as it should be everywhere there are intense resource development pressures (Götzmann et al., 2019). British Columbia is currently not living up to the obligations in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in its consideration of issues associated with resource extraction, development, and impacts on Indigenous women and girls. Furthermore, the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (2015) recommendations are not being met, especially about integrating GBA Plus into all parts of project appraisal.

In northern British Columbia, there is conflict over the Coastal GasLink (CGL) pipeline. This pipeline has been the basis of protests that have garnered international attention and support. The Wet’suwet’en Hereditary Chiefs, a local traditional Indigenous governance body, does not consent to the construction of the pipeline. One reason for this is violence to the land and to Indigenous women’s bodies caused by the intense resource development in the area (MMIWG, 2019; Wickham, 2022). Highway 16, which is adjacent to the pipeline route, is

known as the ‘highway of tears’ due to the immense number of women, especially Indigenous women, who have been murdered or gone missing along this highway. The region has a high number of transient, mostly male, resource extraction workers.

Conflict over the CGL project has gained regulatory attention, with the impact assessment being inadequate, according to the Wet’suwet’en Hereditary Chiefs, for not meaningfully considering the gendered impacts of resource extraction and development. The Wet’suwet’en Hereditary Chiefs filed an application for a Judicial Review of the British Columbia Environmental Assessment Office’s decision to extend the provincial environmental certificate for the CGL pipeline. In the Judicial Review, the Wet’suwet’en Hereditary Chiefs argued that, before extending CGL’s permit, the British Columbia Environmental Assessment Office had a duty to assess evidence of the project’s harms, including the findings of the National Inquiry (MMIWG, 2019). A major reason why the petition for the judicial review was lodged was to seek mitigation of the gendered impacts of resource development and to outline the link between extractive industries and violence against Indigenous women, as well as the issues of non-compliance by the proponent. The request for suspending the permit was dismissed, with the judge determining that the evidence of the National Inquiry predated the environmental certificate for the pipeline being granted, and thus either was considered in the decision or was not relevant to the granting of the permit – and in any event did not trigger the legal obligation for any further assessment. Thus, the Office was within its right to grant the extension (Proctor, 2021).

This case demonstrates many challenges. First of all, the evidence documented in the MMIWG Inquiry remains in stark contrast to the gaps in policy and implementation of gender analyses in impact assessments. When looking closely at the ‘calls for justice’ in the Inquiry, it is clear that Crown jurisdictions in Canada, including federal and provincial resource regulatory governance, lack meaningful engagement on the social impacts of resource development, including mining and pipeline camps, on Indigenous women, girls, trans, and two-spirited people (Hooegeven et al., 2021; Sloan Morgan et al., 2021). This lack of meaningful engagement, the inadequacy of examination of the gendered implications of resource development, and needed improvements in SIA practice, are highly relevant to developing countries as well as to countries in the Global North, like Canada, which are known to have more robust resource regulatory guidance. Yet serious tensions remain in impact assessment, in questions around how to move past check-box approaches to the inclusion of gender, and in addressing issues that are *too hard*, specifically the genocide that was documented in the National Inquiry (MMIWG, 2019).

Based on the thinking in this chapter, our recommendations to improve gendered analysis in SIA for all actors including proponents, governments, and practitioners include the following:

1. *Together with Indigenous nations and/or First Nations, develop culturally safe gender-based analysis protocols that build on Indigenous traditional knowledge.* This recommendation builds on the robust work that is happening that centres Indigenous experience and voices in a safe way, led by people with culturally safe training and experience working with gender-diverse populations and Indigenous knowledge holders.
2. *Meaningfully incorporate consent and gender issues, including gender-based violence, into impact assessment for resource development.* While Canada has policy guidance on GBA Plus, there are moves to incorporate ‘Indigenous trauma-informed support’ into SIA practice (see Chapter 31). This can mean slowing down and allowing for more flexible

timelines to incorporate engagement where community members, including queer and two-spirited peoples, Indigenous women, men, girls, and boys, are heard during engagement processes.

3. *Create stronger opportunities for monitoring and mitigation plans and follow-up.* This includes better and improved guidance and governance implementation. Case study research shows that, while regulatory measures such as GBA Plus guidance are a critical starting point, the reality is that following project approval, there are often few or no monitoring and follow-up measures meaningfully implemented.
4. *Increase dialogue between proponents and governments, especially a dialogue that is Indigenous Nation/First Nation and community based.* This includes making time to clarify and confirm who the appropriate community members, leadership, and local actors are. This can include bringing not-for-profit organisations that work with populations who are under-housed or subject to sex-trafficking into conversations. This is particularly significant where there are impacts of the influx of workers that are foreign to the community.

There remains a need for guidance on gender and intersectional analysis in impact assessment. This guidance is needed to improve gendered and intersectional SIA practice and public participation, fields that have been analysed and written about extensively (Vanclay, 2003; Sinclair et al., 2022a, 2022b). More equitable impact assessment processes are beginning to include all genders. As has been highlighted in several practice oriented guidance documents, justice for women and justice for the land is connected to all genders and ages (NWAC, 2020; WEA-NYSHN, 2016).

CONCLUSION

Given the rise of gendered analysis in impact assessment, we are hopeful for improved practice into the future. There are opportunities to leverage work being done on gender violence and intersectional analysis, including work that centres GBA Plus, building on recommendations to improve intersectional tools and methods in SIA. In northern British Columbia, Northern Health, a regional health authority, has an Office of Health and Resource Development to promote stronger impact assessment policies and to work with proponents and communities (Hoogveen et al., 2022). As summarised in the recommendations above, there is a tremendous opportunity to improve the assessment of gendered and intersectional impacts in impact assessment. There is also much hope for the implementation of gendered and intersectional analysis, given the improvement of guidance and practice in the next generation of impact assessment.

In closing, we would like to highlight that, in Canada, the Impact Assessment Act (Canada, 2019) specifies that the impact assessment of designated projects must consider the ‘intersection of sex and gender with other identity factors’ (Section 22s). Similarly, in the place-based context from which the co-authors of this chapter are situated, in unceded British Columbia, Section 25(2)(d) of the Environmental Assessment Act requires that every assessment consider the ‘disproportionate effects on distinct human populations, *including populations identified by gender*’ (British Columbia, 2018). Furthermore, there are active revisions to the GBA Plus Guidance document developed by the Canadian Impact Assessment Agency. So, we do see a will to improve. Nevertheless, challenges remain in the ebbs and flows of government, and in

how practitioners and regulators are able to integrate and implement GBA Plus so that change can be realised to address the disappearance of Indigenous women and the gender-based violence that is often implicitly *too hard* to discuss let alone regulate. Further improvement would bring an ‘Indigenous trauma-informed approach’ that builds on a ‘walking softly’ philosophy into SIA.

We close this chapter by asking how practitioners, regulators, and proponents around the world can make space for Indigenous trauma-informed approaches that take an ancestral approach to cultural safety, and to use an intersectional gender-based analysis. Some critics remain sceptical of impact assessment, including SIA and the incorporation of gender, suggesting that impact assessment is essentially a structurally violent process that supports environmental injustice by legitimating the destruction of natural resources. If SIA is to escape this criticism, SIA must be more focused on respecting cultural safety, practising humility, and ensuring proper assessment of gender and intersectionality in all assessments and in all projects.

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17. Vulnerable people in the context of social impact assessment and management

Jeroen de Zeeuw and Angela Reeman

INTRODUCTION

Simply defined, ‘vulnerability’ refers to the risk of being exposed to harm. This can relate to natural or anthropogenic disasters, climate change, pandemics, and also to socio-economic shocks, investment projects, and other developments that may cause significant changes to communities and the social and natural environment in which they live (Birkmann & Wisner, 2006; Wood et al., 2021). Vulnerability can be assessed at various levels, for example at global, regional, country, and community level. Moreover, when thinking about vulnerability, we can use different units of analysis: an organisation; a piece of infrastructure; an ecosystem; a society or community; household; or an individual person. This chapter will focus primarily on the assessment of socio-economic vulnerability among certain groups and individuals living in urban and rural communities. It will specifically zoom in on people’s exposure to environmental, social, and economic risks and impacts caused or induced by large-scale infrastructure projects, and will consider how impact assessment and management can be improved to empower vulnerable groups and individuals.

Vulnerable groups and individuals refer to people who are often exposed to several risks and adverse impacts at once, are more sensitive to those risks and impacts, and/or have a weaker adaptive capacity for coping with and recovering from impacts, usually due to limited access to certain assets and/or resources. As a result, when something goes wrong, or a project causes harm, vulnerable groups or individuals are disproportionately affected. Without a strong voice in community decision-making and targeted support measures, vulnerable people and groups often miss out on the potential benefits of major projects, such as employment, the supply of goods or services to the project, and community development opportunities. This chapter, which is largely based on the authors’ experiences as social performance practitioners, argues that vulnerable people need to be recognised as ‘rights holders’, who should be directly involved in the design and negotiation of impact avoidance and mitigation measures during the ex ante social impact assessment (SIA) as well as in any subsequent social impact management activities. Only by empowering and negotiating directly with vulnerable people will projects avoid harm and assist in making vulnerable groups and individuals more resilient, and receptive to change.

WHY VULNERABILITY MATTERS IN SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT

The current standard approach for assessing and managing project-related impacts on vulnerable groups does little for people’s wellbeing and misses opportunities for a more participatory

approach that recognises people's capacities (Smyth & Vanclay, 2017). It is common in SIA reports for consultants to simply provide a list of vulnerable groups or individuals in project-affected communities. Typically, this is based on socio-economic survey results and/or data collected from relevant authorities. Although SIA reports usually include some basic analysis of the different vulnerable groups, in most cases there is no validation of this data with affected communities or the vulnerable people themselves. Moreover, within the SIA process there is usually limited effort to dig deeper into what vulnerability means in terms of the social impacts that might be experienced. As a result, the impact assessment report usually fails to differentiate the type and significance of the environmental and social impacts on the various vulnerable groups or individuals near the project. In most cases, the impact assessment report does not recommend any mitigation measures to ensure that vulnerable people are not severely affected. This results in reports that describe vulnerable groups in substantial detail in community profiles and baseline information, but provide little in the way of specific mitigation or support measures tailored to people's needs. Consequently, when it comes to project implementation, it is common for vulnerable groups and individuals to be overlooked and disproportionately impacted.

A key question, therefore, is how we can better involve vulnerable people in project planning and impact assessment, and put them at the centre of development and implementation of mitigation measures and support programmes. This requires a broader implementation of SIA so that strengthening people's resilience is strongly integrated into the whole process, especially where harm cannot be avoided. It also requires a shift away from the current 'front-end' approach of identifying vulnerable groups during the social baseline study with only limited engagement with local communities regarding the intentional evaluation of each project-related impact on specific vulnerable groups, as well as always implementing a negotiated process with vulnerable people so that they agree on the impact avoidance and mitigation measures to be implemented. Iterative consultation and negotiation with vulnerable groups, led by qualified social staff and/or independent experts, is the only way to develop effective measures for vulnerable groups in environmental and social management plans, and implement them. It is only by actively developing people's capacities during the SIA process that people's resilience can be strengthened and more equitable benefit sharing becomes possible.

There are several important reasons why vulnerability requires specific attention in social impact assessment and management:

- to identify and address the needs of vulnerable people, and respect their human rights early on;
- to ensure inclusive community engagement with practical support that empowers vulnerable people to actively participate in the impact assessment process and enables them to negotiate desired outcomes from the project;
- to anticipate and avoid disproportionate adverse impacts on vulnerable people;
- to develop targeted measures for risk and impact mitigation, monitoring, and other relevant activities that strengthen the resilience of vulnerable people;
- to assist vulnerable groups and individuals in a culturally appropriate and practical manner so they can equitably take advantage of project benefits and development opportunities.

WHAT IS VULNERABILITY, AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR SIA?

Defining Vulnerability

In the context of infrastructure development, vulnerable people are often defined as: ‘People who by virtue of gender, ethnicity, age, physical or mental disability, economic disadvantage, or social status may be more adversely affected by resettlement [or project impacts] than others and who may be limited in their ability to claim or take advantage of ... assistance and related development benefits’ (IFC, 2002, p. xi).

For vulnerable groups and individuals, a small change in their livelihoods can be enough to cause them to fall under the poverty line or deeper into poverty. They may be at risk of discrimination. They are likely to find it difficult to adapt to rapid social change, which disrupts traditional norms and social safety nets. They may be less able to deal with monetary compensation, and be more dependent on in-kind compensation.

Examples of vulnerable groups typically (but not always) include (drawn from a range of sources including ADB, 2009; IFC, 2012a; IHA, 2018; World Bank, 2018):

- elderly people, who may have reduced mobility and often are more sensitive to health-related impacts and less able to adapt to physical and economic displacement impacts;
- women, who may have reduced independent access to resources and finance, and are more at risk of sexual harassment and gender-based violence;
- children and youth, particularly girls, orphans, children of migrant workers living away from the family unit, or those with severely ill parents or living in dysfunctional households, who may be at high risk of being targeted in domestic violence and sexual exploitation;
- migrant workers, who may be excluded from certain labour rights and benefits, or lack access to relevant information and legal advice;
- internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, who often do not have access to land, other resources, or information, and may be traumatised by violence and conflict;
- Indigenous, ethnic, religious minorities, and nomadic people, who may have specific resource or land-use dependence and are often under-represented in formal decision-making processes;
- extremely poor people, who by definition have very limited access to basic services such as water, sanitation, electricity, healthcare, education, finance, and other resources;
- people with disabilities including mental, chronic, and/or terminal physical illnesses;
- groups with low social status/caste, as well as individuals from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI+) community.

There are many factors that cause or contribute to someone’s vulnerability: ‘Disadvantaged or vulnerable status may stem from an individual’s or group’s race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status’ (IFC, 2012b, p. 9, footnote 18). In analysing vulnerability, international standards encourage project developers to ‘also consider factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, culture, literacy, sickness, physical or mental disability, poverty or economic disadvantage, and dependence on unique natural resources’ (IFC, 2012b, p. 9, footnote 18). Vulnerability varies depending on: (1) the

degree of exposure to risks, shocks, and stress situations; (2) people's sensitivity to those risks, shocks and stress situations; and (3) the resources and capacities that people have or can access to withstand and/or adjust to damaging loss and other significant impacts; in other words, people's adaptive or coping capacity. The consequences of being vulnerable are that people may be: (1) excluded from consultation and decision-making; (2) disproportionately affected by project impacts; and/or (3) have limited access to project benefits or reduced possibilities to realise the potential opportunities that such benefits can bring.

Differentiating Types of Vulnerability

To better understand whether and how a project influences people's ability to cope with external shocks or significant changes, SIA needs to distinguish between (ex ante) *structural vulnerability* and (ex post) *project-induced vulnerability*. Structural vulnerability can be defined as the various macro, meso, and micro level institutional, economic and societal processes that are outside the control of local communities and that shape the broader context of vulnerability (Climent-Gil et al., 2018). Structural vulnerability is a group's or individual's limited ability to adapt to change as a result of their long-standing institutional, economic, or socio-cultural characteristics, which pre-date the project. For example, a household living near the proposed site of a new solar farm in a remote underdeveloped area may have been extremely poor long before the project started. In contrast, *project-induced vulnerability* refers to a reduction of a group or individual's coping capacity as a result of project-related impacts. Following the previous example, the construction of the solar farm may result in loss of land, which disproportionately impacts the livelihoods of extremely poor people and exacerbates their impoverishment. This distinction is important as project developers have a primary responsibility to avoid and/or mitigate project-induced vulnerability, while the duty to address structural (pre-existing) vulnerabilities usually lies with the state and/or society at large.

Differentiating Social Conditions and Vulnerable Individuals and Groups

Vulnerability is not inherent to a specific (sub)group of people, but is closely connected to the socio-economic and political conditions that people find themselves in. The presence and actions of strong, vocal, and capable women all over the world – from company boardrooms to market squares, and from megacities to remote rural villages – is testament that women are not more vulnerable than men by nature. Rather, traditional gender roles, cultural practices, discrimination, poverty, and lack of access to decision-making (i.e., structural inequality) have undermined women's resilience and resulted in women often being disproportionately impacted by adverse project impacts. Since vulnerability does not occur in a 'social vacuum', addressing such factors requires a strong project commitment and specific measures to empower women to actively participate in consultation and decision-making processes.

When analysing vulnerable groups, SIA practitioners should be careful not to automatically consider or label the whole group as 'vulnerable'. In many cases, only some people within a group may actually be vulnerable. 'The first step of inclusive development is to recognise the unique needs and experiences of different social groups and the diversity that exists within each group' (Hayes & Caria, 2019, p. 6). Generalising and oversimplifying vulnerability can have a disempowering effect on vulnerable people, including those who are already more resilient. Identifying and leveraging the capacities and experiences of people who are already

more resilient within project-affected groups is essential in helping communities to mitigate any negative project-induced impacts. Describing people as vulnerable and considering them as less able to participate in the assessment and management of impacts can be disempowering as it may marginalise them from decision-making processes.

An effective approach to assessing and addressing vulnerability starts with recognition that vulnerability stems from a broad range of factors that vary across individuals within a social group. For example, studies indicate that women are often disproportionately affected by the development of a nearby mine, road, or powerplant (Nguyen et al., 2021; Thukral & Tripathi, 2016). However, even in poor urban or rural areas near such developments, this does not mean that all women are or automatically become more vulnerable. For many women, improved infrastructure associated with project development provides better access to schools and health clinics for themselves and their families, as well as increased access to markets to sell and buy goods or services. Yet, in those same areas, there are women who will not be able to benefit from such opportunities because of socio-cultural norms, illness, caring responsibilities for other family members, lack of education, or limited access to micro-finance. To develop practical support measures for women in these situations, the SIA should include a gender-responsive context analysis and engagement strategy (Götzmann & Bainton, 2021). The same applies to elderly people living in poor and remote rural locations with limited access to services. Due to their age, elderly people can be more impacted than other population groups when losing grazing land or vegetable gardens due to project land acquisition. For example, during a large hydropower project in Georgia, some vulnerable elderly widows were reportedly under pressure from their sons or other family members to accept a cash payment and move in with them rather than opting for replacement land and housing as compensation for their loss.

Our practical experience on projects in Georgia, Myanmar, Mozambique, and elsewhere shows that it is hard to change people's livelihoods at a later stage in life, particularly for those who have farmed all their lives and may have received only limited formal education or professional skills. Sometimes, there are a few older people who manage to do so; however, for the majority who cannot, a project needs to provide adequate access to replacement land and/or personalised assistance to develop a sustainable alternative livelihood, and help them with the difficult transition of building a life in a new social context. In rapidly urbanising environments such as Vietnam, losing agricultural land for anyone over about 40 years old can significantly impact their livelihood restoration prospects. Even with vocational training and other assistance, this cohort can be vulnerable in terms of their ability to transition to a wage-based livelihood due to the competitive and youth-focused labour market. This is an example of where the vulnerability of a group is not always obvious, and needs careful and early consideration. Even though the development of such measures is usually left to the resettlement or livelihood restoration planning phase, the early identification of differentiated risks for vulnerable groups during the SIA can help affected people and project staff better prepare for what is coming.

Rather than simply classify all women, poor and old people, and people with disabilities as 'vulnerable groups', an SIA should conduct a disaggregated analysis of the directly project-affected population. As explained below, this involves identifying those households and individuals that are already struggling and would not be able to cope on their own with the potentially significant economic, socio-cultural, and environmental changes caused or induced by project development. The big advantage of a household or individual-centric vulnerability

assessment and engagement approach is that it recognises people's capacities and agency, and enables the development of more effective mitigation and social support measures tailored to people's specific needs and social context. It is important to note that a household-centric and tailored approach should not preclude cases where vulnerabilities exist across entire communities (or segments of the community), such as extremely poor, minority and/or Indigenous communities.

REQUIREMENTS OF INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

The protection of vulnerable groups is enshrined in many human rights treaties, conventions and other instruments. The main human rights instruments outlining protection for vulnerable groups include: the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees; the 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The standards developed by international financial institutions provide another important reference point for addressing vulnerability. The World Bank, International Finance Corporation (IFC), the Asian, African, Inter-American, and various European development banks place a number of responsibilities on borrowers for assessing, managing, and monitoring environmental and social risks, including for vulnerable groups and individuals. One of the main requirements is for projects 'to adopt differentiated measures so that adverse impacts do not fall disproportionately on the disadvantaged or vulnerable, and they are not disadvantaged in sharing development benefits and opportunities resulting from the project' (World Bank, 2018, p. 2). What 'differentiated measures' precisely entails is not specified, leaving it to project teams and environmental and social consultants to decide how to address the additional challenges vulnerable groups face. Recognising that vulnerable groups and individuals are often excluded from or unable to participate fully in conventional project consultation and decision-making processes, the international standards also require that projects provide specific measures and assistance to address inequalities.

There are other standards that emphasise the importance of addressing impacts on and assisting vulnerable groups, notably the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security* (FAO, 2022). Specific examples of assistance to vulnerable persons mentioned in the *Voluntary Guidelines* include: the provision of special procedures to secure access to land, fisheries, and forests; legal support (including affordable legal aid, or paralegals) to ensure safe access to justice without discrimination; mobile services for remote communities and mobile Indigenous peoples; and participation in the negotiations and implementation of mitigation and adaptation programmes. Several international organisations have recently reassessed, or are in the process of reassessing, their approach to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. Some of the issues being considered in their processes include: where vulnerability should sit within the overall policy architecture; and whether there is a need for more substantive or targeted policies, standards, and/or guidance documents for marginalised and vulnerable groups. Importantly, 'vulnerability' is a common theme in these revisions to international standards, with all aiming to give greater attention to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups during project development.

It is hoped that these emerging policies will not only provide important additional guidance on the approach to vulnerability in the SIA process, but will align more closely with human rights language around vulnerable and marginalised people as ‘rights holders’ who should be actively supported and empowered to participate in all stages of the SIA planning and implementation process.

PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES FOR ENGAGING WITH VULNERABLE GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS

For SIA to become a more effective tool to address project-induced vulnerability, vulnerable groups and individuals should be more involved in the SIA process itself. This can be realised in a number of ways as discussed below.

More Inclusive Engagement

Vulnerability should be explicitly considered in the planning and implementation of stakeholder engagement strategies. Vulnerable people are typically among the least vocal members of a community. With standard stakeholder engagement strategies generally being focused on the more influential and loudest actors – who are often and sometimes erroneously considered to be critical for maintaining a project’s ‘social license to operate’ – weaker voices, in particular those of vulnerable people, are often drowned out (Esteves & Vanclay, 2009). Consequently, most formal consultation processes do not adequately address the challenges, views, and needs of vulnerable groups.

More Targeted and Outcome-Driven Engagement

Although there is increased recognition that SIA needs to include engagement with vulnerable groups, large public information meetings, standard focus group discussions, and some other engagement methods used in SIAs are not suitable to bring out the voice of vulnerable individuals. Engagement with representatives of vulnerable group and individuals must be more targeted, more collaborative, and focused on people’s own ideas as well as on the development of mutually agreed mitigation and support measures. Empowering vulnerable persons is the only way to ensure they are not disproportionately impacted. This can be done by organising participatory workshops – independently facilitated, where needed – to identify and explain the key environmental and social impacts that are likely to affect vulnerable groups more severely, and to discuss the mitigation measures needed to reduce the level of impact. This could include a series of engagements with an existing or specially formed committee to discuss impacts that may affect vulnerable groups. For example, one series of engagements could focus on the influx of a large and mostly male workforce to identify the potential impacts this may present to women and girls, and to agree on the support measures needed to minimise the risks of sexual harassment, prostitution, gender-based violence (GBV), etc. Such engagements should include appropriate community-based organisations and/or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with local experience (e.g., in harm reduction, GBV, protection of sex workers, etc.) as well as relevant local authorities. The goal should be to include a set of agreed and practical measures in the SIA management plan that the project should implement

to effectively mitigate the potential impacts as well as steps the community themselves can take. This outcome-driven engagement is central to informed consultation and participation with project-affected communities.

Develop Capacities for More Equitable and Effective Engagement

Intensive and complex forms of engagement with some vulnerable groups can be difficult, and in some cases, certain cohorts (or entire communities) will need support to build their capacity before meaningful engagement can begin. For many ethnic minority groups, Indigenous peoples, and/or remote rural communities, the very nature of a potential project, let alone its impacts, may be completely foreign. It may take time to develop their understanding of the project and about the positive and adverse impacts it could have. In Papua New Guinea, for example, the use of trusted local facilitators and creative methods of engagement, including videos, oral presentations, role plays, and site tours, are needed to account for the many local dialects, low levels of literacy (particularly among women and vulnerable groups), and the remote nature of communities with limited experience of the wider world. Good practice engagement with vulnerable groups also includes an effective community grievance mechanism, and agreement-making involving independent specialists (e.g., witness NGOs, a committee of experts, other observers).

TOWARDS BETTER ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF IMPACTS ON VULNERABLE PEOPLE

A holistic and inclusive approach to vulnerability in impact assessment and mitigation is much more than highlighting the need to ‘prioritise vulnerable groups’ or ‘pay particular attention to engagement with women and other vulnerable groups’ in the SIA report. Whilst well intended, these refrains tend to generalise risks to vulnerable groups, and do not lead to tangible, implementable, and beneficial mitigation and management measures. Nevertheless, there are several ways to improve SIA for vulnerable groups.

Evaluation of Each Impact on Specific Vulnerable Groups

Assessment of the significance of each relevant impact should separately and clearly identify all vulnerable groups and consider how these groups are likely to be disproportionately affected. Adding vulnerability criteria to the impact significance matrix is a good start, but is not sufficient. Detailed and disaggregated data and information should be provided about the vulnerable groups and why they are vulnerable to each specific impact. This should be differentiated in the impact analysis table. For example, in addition to identifying traffic safety impacts to communities along a transport route, it would be important to identify with relevant specificity the impacts on any vulnerable groups. For example, ‘school aged children from villages A, B, and C along the main access road to site will be disproportionately impacted by construction traffic for 24 months.’ This would allow for targeted additional measures to be implemented (e.g., school-based traffic safety campaigns, traffic calming measures near schools, etc.) in addition to more general mitigations (e.g., road safety signage, driver training, in-vehicle monitoring, etc.). One way to test the robustness of the vulnerability analysis in

the SIA is to ask the question: 'If we have to implement mitigation measures X, Y and Z next month, which vulnerable groups will specifically need to be involved?' The other critical way to check if the SIA report has identified the relevant vulnerable groups and impacts is for the SIA consultant to have a facilitated discussion with these groups and/or their representatives about each significant impact before the final SIA/ESIA report and management plan is prepared.

Minimising the Risk of Stigma and Conflict

There is a need to carefully reduce any conflict that could be created by offering differentiated measures for vulnerable groups. In some contexts, it may be readily accepted that vulnerable people will receive additional and/or more tailored support, whereas in other contexts, vulnerable people or groups may be considered as 'outsiders' (e.g., itinerant artisanal miners, migrant labourers) and any special effort for such groups could be negatively received by other affected people, to the point of causing conflict, refusal to participate, or similar. (Self-) identification as 'vulnerable' may also be a significant stigma for some people or groups, and locally appropriate definitions and approaches are needed. Where any such risks exist, measures should be developed to ensure people are not disempowered and that support is inclusive and extended to other directly affected people.

Taking a Household-Centric Approach

For significant impacts such as physical and/or economic displacement, or where specific cohorts are considered vulnerable to multiple impacts (such as Indigenous peoples, remote, and/or impoverished groups), a household-centric approach is needed to assess and address vulnerability. This involves identification of each family who is vulnerable through a rigorous process of surveys, self-identification, community validation, and creation of a vulnerable persons database with detailed vulnerability analysis and key socio-economic data. This can be done as part of the census and household-level socio-economic survey during the resettlement action planning process, or by enhancing the social baseline study that is part of the SIA. It will require the involvement of in-house social performance staff with practical local experience in engaging with vulnerable groups and developing social protection programmes.

This approach is recommended because of the multiple impacts on, and multiple vulnerabilities of, each vulnerable household, which can only be effectively addressed with a tailored set of support measures. For example, an elderly couple living in their own house on land not owned by them, and who rely on raising small livestock and growing food in their vegetable garden, will face security of tenure, food security, health, impoverishment, and other impacts if they are resettled. Generalised programmes will usually not be sufficient to address these complex situations. Good international industry practice is to develop and implement a Vulnerable People Plan. Ideally, these plans include household-level plans for each vulnerable family with support measures tailored to each family, usually developed from a pre-approved package of different support options, rather than a laundry list of different actions for each family, which is not practicable for project developers.

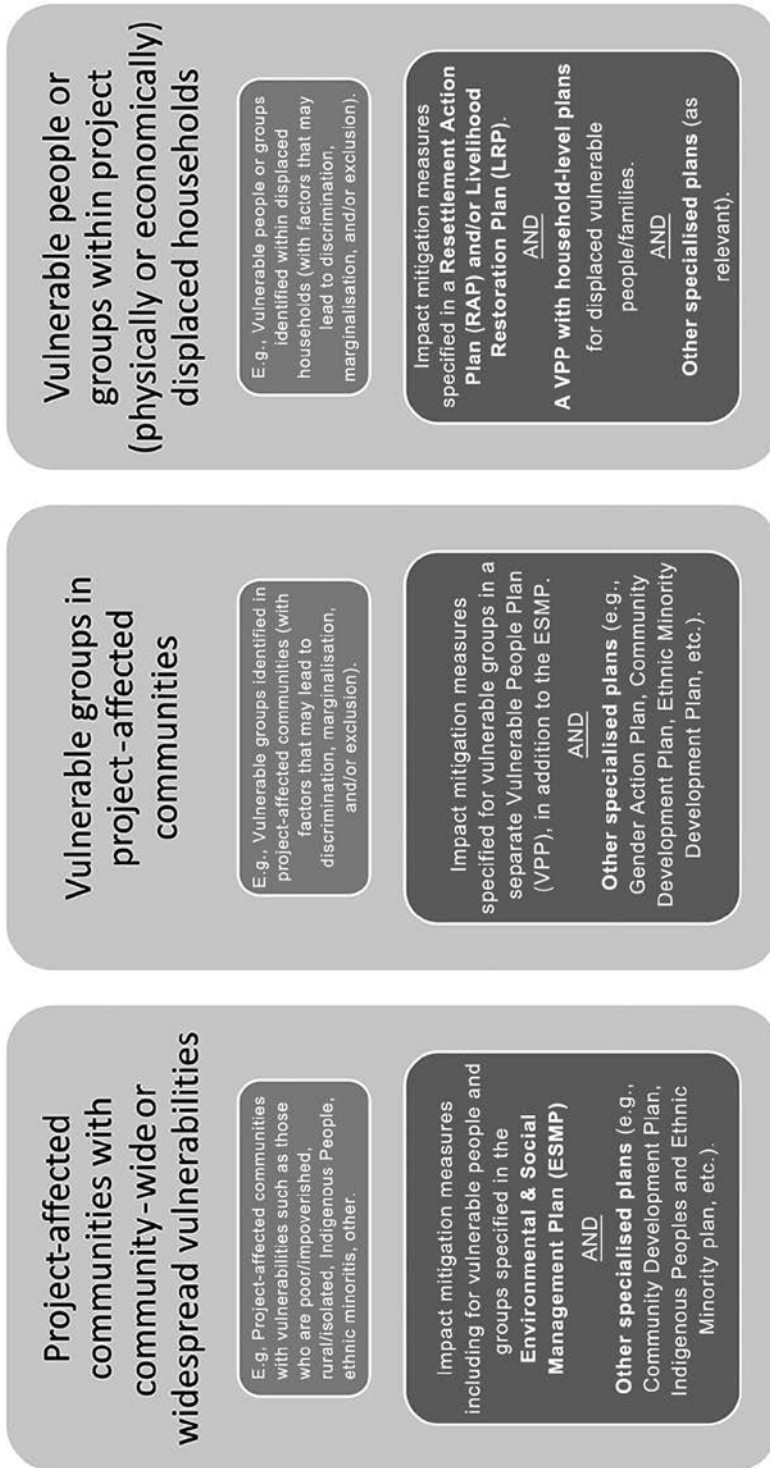
Household-level Vulnerable People Plans (VPPs) and detailed Vulnerable People Programmes, which have been developed in various countries, generally include a clear and concise summary of the social, financial, health, housing, and land and natural resource

status of each vulnerable family using a traffic light rating system. This information is based on surveys and in-person validation by a social officer dedicated to implementing the VPP. An action plan focused on building resilience in key areas and minimising project-related impacts (practical actions, dates, responsibilities, costs, and key performance indicators) is also developed. Some actions undertaken in these VPPs include: after economic displacement, the provision of staple foods to certain vulnerable people for a longer period than to the rest of the population; healthcare visits organised through an existing local health service; and debt reduction support via a specially formed community-based micro-finance scheme. The process of implementation of the VPP should be coordinated with local authorities and experienced service providers to ensure alignment and buy-in by the vulnerable groups and other relevant stakeholders. Although addressing structural or pre-existing vulnerabilities is not the responsibility of a project proponent, for significant impacts, companies will need to contribute to development activities to effectively mitigate the disproportionate severity of impacts on vulnerable groups. In some cases, extra effort by project proponents will be required for the whole community, for example, if they are collectively identified as a vulnerable group (e.g., extreme poor, minority group, etc.).

Displacement and other severe impacts require use of a household-centric model to adequately address vulnerability. This means that any Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) and/or Livelihood Restoration Plan (LRP) should include household-level development plans. For vulnerable people within displaced households, there should be targeted mitigation and support measures that should be outlined in a separate Displaced Vulnerable People's Plan, which can be included in the RAP and/or LRP (see Figure 17.1). For impacts that may disproportionately affect (non-displaced) vulnerable groups, a VPP (or dedicated vulnerable people section in an Environmental and Social Management Plan), which clearly outlines the differentiated mitigation measures, would normally suffice. These plans would typically outline the group-level mitigation measures for identified vulnerable people for each relevant impact. The impacts on vulnerable groups that may be addressed through these cohort-level plans include things like: increased traffic along transport routes; noise and dust from construction; influx issues from a large workforce; and labour practices. For example, a local content plan could have special recruitment procedures, additional training, mentoring, and targets to maximise employment of local women.

Negotiated Process to Develop Dedicated Mitigation and Management Measures

After the initial surveys and consultations to identify, validate, and analyse vulnerable people and groups – but before the SIA report is ready for disclosure – facilitated negotiations are needed to collaboratively develop mitigation measures for each project-related impact. In these discussions, each significant impact needs to be clearly described to the potentially impacted vulnerable groups – in appropriate formats using maps, figures, similar examples, etc. – and proposed mitigation measures are discussed and agreed on together. This process is best led by in-house social staff supported by an SIA consultant. For example, this could be a series of engagements with a vulnerable people committee, education staff, police, and local authorities to identify the school children and other groups particularly at risk from an increase in traffic during construction. The outcome would be an agreed set of measures documented in the draft SIA report (and relevant management plan) to address the vulnerability of these groups to the traffic-related impacts. These may include traffic calming measures near schools, hospitals,



Source: The authors.

Figure 17.1 Different types of plans for vulnerable people depending on the degree of impact and level of vulnerability

etc., regular traffic safety training with school children and parents, and if warranted, by-pass roads or similar measures to avoid vulnerable groups altogether. These measures would be in addition to other general measures, such as compulsory speed limits, driver training, in-vehicle monitoring, implementing an incident procedure, etc. This approach can be replicated for other impacts that will likely impact vulnerable groups more severely than other impacted people.

It is desirable to develop a dedicated VPP that highlights the special measures required for vulnerable groups, and ensure its inclusion in the SIA and/or in relevant sections within the environmental and social management plans. Mitigation measures that are specifically targeted to certain vulnerable groups are increasingly appearing in SIA reports, but, typically, separate VPPs are only developed for some major projects. However, the assessment of risks and issues for vulnerable people would benefit from some of the practices commonly used in resettlement practice. For example, in good practice resettlement, RAPs and LRPs are closely developed with affected stakeholders including local authorities. Such plans are usually based on intensive engagement that result in an agreed (negotiated) set of tailored support measures. Nevertheless, caution is needed in the SIA process and especially in the project that there are not multiple, overlapping, and competing plans that cause confusion and are unlikely to be implemented. To ensure that mitigations intended for vulnerable people are actually implemented by a project, the project team will need to allocate experienced (in-house) social staff very early in the feasibility phase to carefully oversee all work with vulnerable groups in the project area.

A Practical Methodology for Vulnerability Impact Assessment and Management

To ensure that the specific impacts, mitigation, and support measures for vulnerable people are addressed effectively, projects are advised to take the steps outlined in Table 17.1. Specifying the desired outcomes upfront helps to clarify the focus of each process step and its result (in terms of outputs). In principle, these steps apply to all types of projects, regardless of sector and scale.

HOW LARGE-SCALE PROJECTS CAN STRENGTHEN PEOPLE'S RESILIENCE

In order to have a positive impact on people's resilience and wellbeing, a project should recognise community vulnerability early on in the social risk screening process and ensure that development benefits will be shared in an equitable manner. Assessing resilience involves understanding the community risk factors and developing a strategy to enhance their wellbeing and livelihoods, while respecting their culture, customs, beliefs, and values (Esteves & Vanclay, 2009). Sometimes, the most important mitigation measures for vulnerable people and groups are those associated with building resilience, so that they are not more marginalised or at risk than other affected people. One of the most effective ways to build resilience and help vulnerable people gain and maintain their own agency is to involve their families and other community members in the design of support measures. Our experience has shown that there will be much greater success in livelihood restoration when vulnerable people are integrated into livelihood restoration programmes with other (non-vulnerable) households. Putting all vulnerable households together in their own separate programme typically does not

Table 17.1 *Steps in vulnerability impact assessment and management*

Step	Desired outcome	Actions	Project outputs
1.	Accurate understanding of the extent of vulnerability in the project area of influence.	Identification of vulnerable groups and people using multiple data sources and verification of data by communities. With communities and relevant authorities, validate the vulnerable individuals, families, and groups identified in the SIA report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Validated list of vulnerable groups, sub-groups, and individual people, including location information.
2.	In-depth understanding of the scope and range of vulnerability.	Identify the project-related risks that could disproportionately impact vulnerable groups and individuals. Where possible, avoid impacts on vulnerable people. Each analysis specifically identifies who, how, and why vulnerable groups and individuals may be more impacted than other affected people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Table with potential project impacts and their significance, and indication of how each impact could disproportionately impact the vulnerable (sub)groups identified under 1.
3.	Informed consultation, participation, and negotiated outcomes with vulnerable groups and individuals.	Development of inclusive engagement methods that enable the effective participation of vulnerable groups and individuals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement strategy tailored to different types of vulnerable groups and individuals. Evidence of such engagement to be documented in public consultation reports.
4.	Vulnerable groups and individuals are not disproportionately impacted, and their standard of living and livelihoods are improved (or at least maintained).	Identify targeted and tailored mitigation measures and benefit-sharing supports developed in close consultation with vulnerable groups, individuals, communities, local authorities, and local NGOs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Management Plan or Vulnerable People Plan that specifies how project impacts will be mitigated for the different vulnerable groups and individuals, and the support measures required to ensure equitable project benefit-sharing.
5.	Effective and adequately resourced VPP managed by experienced social specialists.	Develop Terms of Reference (ToR) with clear roles & responsibilities for managing the VPP. Develop estimated budget for VPP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experienced social specialists in place and responsible for the VPP. Budget approved by management.
6.	Vulnerable groups and persons have access to tailored support programmes implemented by trusted and experienced organisations as well as enhanced safety nets via household, family and community members.	Implement programme with targeted measures in partnership with experienced and locally acceptable partner organisations (NGOs, government agencies, other service providers) as well as local families and the wider community. Some mitigation measures will need to include in-kind support that address underlying vulnerabilities so vulnerable people can withstand the shock of project impacts successfully.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear ToR for partnership agreements to implement the (household-level) Vulnerable People Plan. Detailed implementation plans from implementation partners.

Step	Desired outcome	Actions	Project outputs
7.	Vulnerable groups and persons have access to independent expertise, and the project is accountable for effective implementation of the VPP.	Retain independent third-party specialist to assist in risk assessment and the development, implementation, and monitoring of mitigation measures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clear ToR for independent technical support and oversight of the Vulnerable People Plan.
8.	VPP completed, and objectives met.	Implement a monitoring, evaluation, and reporting of the VPP internally, and with external input.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Monitoring & evaluation plan and reports (e.g., outcome evaluation report, completion report).

Source: The authors.

result in successful outcomes. This is because such households often do not have the capacity to make it work on their own, at least initially. Moreover, in reality communities are mixed and usually do not operate in a segregated way. Vulnerable people are part of the social networks within a community, so integration lifts everyone and minimises conflict. All contributions towards community development, including support to vulnerable people, need to be designed in collaboration with relevant authorities and leverage credible local, regional, and national programmes where appropriate.

Large oil and gas, mining, hydro, solar, and wind power projects can provide significant development opportunities to people living in remote and impoverished areas, especially if they are managed and resourced well. By providing direct and indirect employment, creating business opportunities and improving infrastructure, such projects have the potential to improve the living standards of large numbers of people. If people living in the area are well informed about such opportunities in a timely and culturally appropriate manner, there can be many people who see possibilities to develop their skills, come together to establish a business, and may take actions to increase their resilience. However, for vulnerable groups and individuals to benefit equally from development opportunities requires extra efforts from project developers, local and national authorities, the communities themselves, and by other development partners. For example, to ensure that people with a physical disability can also be part of the workforce, tailored transport solutions or adapted workplaces need to be created. In areas where women from marginalised or ethnic minority groups would normally struggle to set up a business, a business development programme by a locally trusted partner organisation could tackle any barriers by providing tailor-made entrepreneurship training, practical mentoring, and/or access to credit. At a local or regional level, large-scale projects can work with relevant authorities and other businesses in the area to develop integrated economic development programmes that can offer targeted training, and logistic or other support to boost the employment and local business opportunities for vulnerable groups. To ensure that benefits are felt across all segments of a project-affected community, benefit-sharing programmes should be designed with meaningful participation from each vulnerable group and include targeted assistance measures to strengthen people’s resilience (ActionAid, 2004).

CONCLUSION

There is increasing emphasis by projects on supporting vulnerable affected groups and giving special attention to engagement with them. Nevertheless, more is needed to embed solutions within the SIA process, especially measures that go beyond simply undertaking household

surveys to identify vulnerable people in the project area of influence and having a few targeted focus group discussions with vulnerable groups during social baseline studies. This chapter has elaborated on some solutions, with the critical ones summarised below.

Analysis of each impact and who and how it affects different vulnerable groups is needed within the SIA report. Differentiated and practical mitigation measures are critical to minimising potentially severe project-induced impacts on vulnerable people. Vulnerability needs to be better embedded into the impact assessment and management plan. Additionally, impacts on vulnerable people should be validated with vulnerable groups and their representatives, and tailored mitigation measures should be developed and agreed collaboratively. Existing or specially formed groups should be mobilised to consider the different impacts on vulnerable people, and to facilitate their participation in comprehensive negotiations about how to address the impacts. Engagement is needed well beyond the baseline study phase and in more detail than would normally occur in any generalised discussions about issues that might affect vulnerable groups. Creative methods are recommended to help representatives conceptualise each impact and its severity, and to develop practical mitigation measures (e.g., site walkovers, visioning, scenario building, etc.). For significant impacts such as physical and economic displacement, a household-centric model for identification, assessment, and mitigation is recommended because it is the extended household that provides the primary safety net for most vulnerable people (and often for vulnerable communities). A household-level focus ensures that some pre-existing vulnerabilities can be addressed by a developer so that project impacts are not likely to be as severe and vulnerable groups can access and fully realise the compensation and other benefits intended for them.

Good practice is to have a separate VPP and/or dedicated sections of topic-specific environmental and social management plans with special mitigations for vulnerable groups and clear ownership and responsibility for delivery within the project. Strong project commitment is needed to ensure that project impacts on vulnerable groups are not more severe than on other groups, and that the impacts can be effectively mitigated. This requires dedicated social and other staff with responsibility for affected vulnerable people in the project area of influence. For example, an experienced social worker can help the elderly and people with mental health problems to deal with the major psychological impacts of resettlement. Addressing vulnerability cannot be outsourced to the ESIA or other consultants and requires a combination of in-house staff and expert support. Some vulnerable groups may need external independent expertise and support to engage with project developers. Trusted facilitators, observers, and/or other independent monitors are recommended for project contexts where there are multiple vulnerable groups, significant negative impacts, a high risk of human rights impacts, or other complex issues (e.g., post-conflict situations, affected Indigenous peoples, critical cultural heritage).

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18. Psychosocial impacts

Michael R. Edelstein and Frank Vanclay

INTRODUCTION

The social impacts experienced by communities that host projects are many and varied, and cover a wide range of domains (Vanclay, 2002). Ultimately, all impacts are social in that they occur in a social context, and they affect people and how people experience their lives, livelihoods, and environments (Wolf, 1982; Vanclay, 2012). Although Social Impact Assessment (SIA) attempts to address all impacts that affect people (Vanclay, 2003; Esteves et al., 2012; Vanclay et al., 2015), one topic area that remains under-considered is that of psychosocial impacts and mental health (Moreira et al., 2022). Perhaps this is due to reluctance by proponents and regulators (and some impact assessment practitioners) to accept that projects are responsible for the psychosocial impacts they trigger, and there may be a view that this topic area belongs to health impact assessment (HIA) rather than to SIA. Nevertheless, mainstream SIA has always advocated that psychosocial impacts should be fully considered in impact assessment (Finsterbusch, 1982; Freudenburg et al., 1982; Interorganizational Committee, 1994; Vanclay, 2003; Vanclay et al., 2015).

Assessment of psychosocial impacts can be done as part of an SIA or an HIA, or as a separate psychosocial impact assessment (PSIA). PSIA unpacks the psychosocial and emotional significance of the changes that affected people experience or perceive, and gives special attention to those people who are most affected. Like all forms of impact assessment, PSIA can be prospective (ex ante) or retrospective (ex post). Retrospective assessments play an important role in understanding and learning about the consequences of past projects or events on people. Prospective assessment should be done for all proposed actions or projects, for example: the siting of pipelines; the building of a waste incinerator, power plant, or other industrial facilities; the construction of a dam, airport, or roadway; or the operation of a mine. Retrospective and prospective approaches are also linked in that retrospective analyses of past situations assist in making predictions about the likely future impacts of a proposed project or possible event.

WHAT ARE PSYCHOSOCIAL IMPACTS?

Psychosocial impacts are the subset of the social impacts arising from projects, disasters, and unwanted change that specifically relate to the mental health, psychological wellbeing, and emotions of people. Psychosocial impacts can dislodge people from their normal everyday life, alter the ways people understand and experience their world, disrupt their patterns of daily activities and accustomed behaviour, increase the level of stress, and diminish their psychological functioning. Psychosocial impacts range from feeling annoyed or inconvenienced through to debilitating conditions and significant trauma. The experience of psychosocial impacts may affect a person's health and wellbeing, and, especially where a person's coping resources

are already strained by pre-existing conditions, may result in serious physical health issues (including cancer, cardiovascular disease, gastro-intestinal issues, musculoskeletal disorders, respiratory issues, or weakened immune system) and/or clinical psychopathology (e.g. anxiety disorders, depression, self-harming, suicidal ideation).

Psychosocial impacts deal with actual experiences as well as with changes in perception. Although a person's perceptions about something may vary from the scientific facts about it, nevertheless psychosocial impacts are real and impactful in themselves. They can be experienced directly, for example as emotional and other psychosocial responses to air or water pollution, noise, or to changes in one's surroundings. They can also be secondary or tertiary, for example, the emotional and other psychosocial responses that arise from changes to one's health, sense of place, sense of safety and security, or to the actual or perceived value or liveability of their home. Anger at the failure of government or other responsible parties to act effectively to prevent threats can also occur. The experience of psychosocial impacts may cause further impacts, for example, when parents become so absorbed about an issue that they neglect their children, their work, or other responsibilities. Smoking and other substance abuse, sleeplessness, and irritability, which are common reactions to stress, have further consequences for the health and mental wellbeing of an individual and their family. Psychosocial impacts may trigger people's opposition to a project. Finally, tension between the supporters and opponents of a project can lead to intracommunity conflict, and to further psychosocial impacts.

Projects trigger a wide range of emotional reactions (Vanclay, 2002; Edelman, 2003), with different emotions likely at the various stages of a project. In some cases, projects might trigger positive emotions such as excitement, hope, or a sense of relief, especially if local people were wanting work and they thought that they might get a job, or if they wanted real estate values to increase because they wanted to sell or rent-out their property. More likely, however, is that a project will trigger emotions like uncertainty, anxiety, and fear about what will happen. News of a planned project or the experience of impacts might trigger annoyance, anger, or fear, which could lead to protest actions (Hanna et al., 2016). When cherished places are threatened or destroyed, this may lead to sadness, a sense of loss, dread, and perhaps grief and mourning. If people feel that their concerns were not being listened to or acted upon, this might exacerbate their anger and frustration, and, if they were over-stressed, they may experience feelings of hopelessness, despondency, powerlessness, apathy, or alienation (disconnection from others).

Projects can also lead to a range of changes in people's behaviour, which often flow from the emotional reactions they experience due to the project. Notable changes in behaviour include an alteration to patterns of sleep (leading to tiredness, insomnia, sleeplessness), over-eating, increased smoking, and substance abuse. There may be an increased incidence of aggressive behaviour and gender-based violence. There may be marital disharmony, household conflict, and child abuse.

Projects also affect the assumptions and perceptions that people hold about themselves and their situation. Very likely, people will experience a change in their sense of security, belonging and sense of place. They may feel that they are no longer safe. People may reconsider the level of control they have over their lives (a psychological construct known as the 'locus of control'). If they feel a lack of respect from the project and/or government, they may have a changed sense of their self-worth, self-image, and even of their body-image. They are likely to experience a change in their level of trust in others and in their government at all levels,

which will affect the level of safety, security, and certainty they feel. They may feel they are being stigmatised or discriminated against, a sense of injustice, or a lack of fairness. Over time, there may be a change in their personal values, and potentially to what they perceive as their community's values.

There are various factors that mediate the psychosocial impacts that might be experienced as a result of a proposed project. Most important are the actions taken by the project. If their community engagement strategy is genuine, meaningful, and effective, if they are attentive and listening, and if they carefully consider the social and environmental impacts that their project is likely to create, and modify it accordingly in advance as well as in response to any issues that arise along the way, harm will be reduced. The resilience and coping resources of community members are other factors. People in circumstances where they have limited resilience and/or restricted coping resources will be more likely to experience severe psychosocial impacts. Vulnerable individuals and groups need to be given special attention to ensure that they are not unduly affected.

There are various specific psychosocial impacts that may arise in certain situations. For example, if a project made lots of promises or if community members had many expectations of a project that were not met, then dissatisfaction with the project would arise. If a project intended to destroy a sacred site or significant cultural heritage, or if it failed to be respectful of local culture or beliefs, this might result in cultural affront or moral outrage. After an extreme event or disaster, there may be bereavement and post-traumatic stress disorder. Finally, although similar to what Vanclay (2002) called 'nostalgic melancholy', an emergent concept relating to disruption to sense of place is 'solastalgia'. Coined by philosopher Glenn Albrecht (2005), 'Solastalgia is the pain or sickness caused by the loss of, or inability to derive solace from, the present state of one's home environment. Solastalgia exists when there is recognition that the beloved place in which one resides is under assault. Any context in which pervasive change to the existing order challenges place identity has potential to deliver solastalgia' (Albrecht, 2006, p. 34). The concept is now becoming well-established around the world (Kennedy, 2016; Galway et al., 2019; Cáceres et al., 2022).

THE HISTORY OF PSYCHOSOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

As with many forms of impact assessment, SIA and PSIA were spawned by the United States National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). Michael Edelstein was a key person in developing a process for understanding the psychological and social-psychological dynamics of how people are affected by changes in their community. With Edelstein joining Charlie Wolf's Center for Social Impact Assessment in the late 1970s, PSIA was included in several SIA studies in the mid-1980s that related to high-level nuclear waste disposal, which were funded by the US Department of Energy, including the Richton Dome in Mississippi and the Hanford Nuclear Repository in Washington State (Edelstein, 2007). Edelstein's research also led to retrospective PSIA being used in lawsuits related to environmental contamination, beginning with litigation over harm done to residents living near the failed landfill at Jackson Township in New Jersey (Edelstein, 1981, 2004).

Retrospective PSIA research arguably first occurred following the 1972 Buffalo Creek disaster in West Virginia USA, where a mining dam collapsed killing 125 people (Erikson, 1976). Other key events that contributed to the development of PSIA included the discovery in

the late 1970s of contamination of local communities around Love Canal, near Niagara Falls in New York State, USA. Love Canal had been an industrial waste disposal site, but was converted into a residential area and school in the 1950s. For some decades, chronic environmental contamination affected local families, before being officially confirmed in the late 1970s, leading to closure of schools, eviction of people, and a massive clean-up (Gibbs, 1982; Levine, 1982; Edelstein, 1988, 2004). The Three Mile Island nuclear power station disaster in 1979 also attracted extensive psychosocial investigation (Dohrenwend et al., 1981; Houts, 1989), as did the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster (Marples, 1988; Ginzburg, 1993). The proposal to restart Three Mile Island was also subject to much discussion of psychosocial impacts and legal issues (Llewellyn & Freudenburg, 1989). The psychosocial impacts of the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989 have also been much discussed (Picou et al., 1992; Rodin et al., 1992; Palinkas et al., 1993; Gill et al., 2012, 2016; Ritchie, 2012; Gill & Ritchie, 2020).

In March 2011, the Great East Japan Earthquake triggered many tsunamis and led to the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident (together called the ‘triple disaster’), which has had many ongoing psychosocial impacts (Shigemura & Chhem, 2016; Maeda & Oe, 2017). The psychosocial impacts of many other events, projects, or issues have also been considered, including: dams (Luís et al., 2015; Marques et al., 2015); floods (Paranjothy et al., 2011); hydraulic fracturing (fracking) (Hirsch et al., 2018; Soyer et al., 2020); local contamination (Brown & Mikkelsen, 1997; Calloway et al., 2020; Menegatto et al., 2022); solid waste facilities (Taylor et al., 1991; Lima & Marques, 2005); toxic waste spills (Hastrup et al., 2007); and climate change (Doherty & Clayton, 2011). The psychosocial impacts experienced by Indigenous peoples have also been studied (Berger, 1977; Shkilnyk, 1985; Firelight, 2021; see Chapter 31). Finally, it is worth noting that the development of PSIA was much influenced by Bullard (1990) and other work on environmental justice.

A THEORETICAL MODEL FOR THINKING ABOUT PSYCHOSOCIAL IMPACTS

Edelstein (Edelstein & Wandersman, 1987; Edelstein 1988, 2004) developed the Theory of Environmental Turbulence (TET) from the emergent findings of his early work on psychosocial impacts, which was refined over time. TET posits that people’s lives are immersed in a cumulative surround (experienced as normalcy) around which thoughts, understandings, and expectations (*lifescape*), patterns of behaviour (*lifestyle*), and psychological balance (*lifestrain*) are organised. When environmental turbulence alters or shatters this normalcy, it affects these interconnected psychosocial domains. In a ‘psychosocial vortex’, each of these domains can create agitation in the other domains (Edelstein, 2000). The utility of TET for PSIA researchers is that it provides a structure for examining any situation, has enough flexibility to be adjusted to each particular situation, and is open to refinement to account for new findings.

Lifescape

People’s understanding of their lives rests upon a core set of underlying assumptions, the *lifescape*. The *lifescape* is so tightly woven into daily experience that it routinely falls below the threshold of awareness. It becomes visible when significantly challenged, for example by

environmental turbulence. Lifescape impact can be assessed according to changes to several key factors that are likely to be relevant to most situations (Edelstein, 2004).

- **Inversion of health:** Environmental turbulence potentially threatens health and health perception. In societies where people tend to have a presumption of good health, an encounter with environmental turbulence can invert the presumption, resulting in an expectation of impending illness. When significantly compromised or threatened, health emerges from the background, becoming a dominant concern demanding attention, worry, modified behaviour, anticipatory vigilance, and precaution.
- **Inversion of self:** The belief that one exercises a substantial degree of control over the course of one's life is basic to the psychological concept of self in Western society. Environmental turbulence often contradicts this assumption as people are forced to react in undesired and involuntary ways to changed, often unanticipated, circumstances, typically with little influence over the outcomes. Often, they become 'disabled', dependent on the expertise and control of others. Furthermore, they may lose their coping resources, and experience stress. They can become incapacitated and unable to manage, as their previous tried-and-true methods for managing life no longer work, and they are confronted with a new reality with new rules beyond their control. And whatever hopes for the future they may have held may be dashed; the future is now also beyond their control.
- **Inversion of home, community, and 'place':** Under ideal circumstances, home is a major social and psychological anchor. It is expected to be a place of relative peace, calmness, and personal security; somewhere to personalise, be openly expressive, and to be oneself; a place for intimacy, family, and privacy; somewhere to safely store possessions; a symbol of one's social position; a locus for social and environmental connection; the embodiment of a family's significant investment and financial security; and sometimes the basis for economic wellbeing. Community is a shared source of supportive social relationships and experiences, organised services and amenities, and identity. Place is a term variously defined by different disciplines. Here it refers to the locale surrounding the home, representing both the built environment and the features of the natural environment that support outdoor activities, valued scenic surround, and contact with nature. Environmental turbulence potentially inverts home, community, and place, destroying their associated values and degrading their qualities, potentially making them undesirable and perhaps even uninhabitable, such that temporary or permanent displacement may result, while those who remain may experience 'deplacement', an alienation from home, community, and place, and yearn to escape (see also Edelstein, 1986).
- **Inversion of environment:** For many people, the environment is routinely (mis)treated as a neutral or inert backdrop to, and separate from, the social realm. However, when environmental turbulence occurs, suddenly the environment becomes relevant, present, and often dangerous and threatening. Adaptations may be required to survive. The gap between people and their environment may be enlarged as a result of a new caution or insecurity; conversely, the gap may diminish for others as they take turbulence as a wakeup call to connect to the environment. Examining the impact of energy projects on Canadian First Nations, Gill and Ritchie (2023) concluded that inversion occurs when local resources become insufficient to sustain traditional culture, lifestyles, and lifescapes, which undermines self-determination, self-governance, self-identity, as well as the security and resilience that normally exists in traditional socioecological relationships. For Indigenous

peoples, there is no separation between person and environment and there is a recognised reciprocal relationship with nature. From a sustainability standpoint, this connection gives resilience, but in the face of environmental destruction, it also represents a special vulnerability (Reading & Wien, 2009; Gill & Ritchie, 2023).

- **Inversion of livelihood:** Environmental turbulence may alter the foundations that underpin people's livelihood activities. It may deprive people of the resources, abilities, rewards, or context needed to maintain and perform their livelihood, or even to sustain life.
- **Inversion of trust:** Environmental turbulence threatens the basic fabric that holds society together, including the presumption of mutual trust, confidence in social networks and institutions to be protective, to offer assistance when required, and to have our best interests at heart. Under the pressure of environmental turbulence, common interests may diverge, and relationships become hostile and conflictive. Institutions may fail to fulfil their duties (Freudenburg, 1993; Edelstein, 2014). Distrust is magnified when environmental turbulence is anthropocentric (human-caused), for example as a result of institutional failure, corporate negligence, or deliberate acts. Even so-called 'natural disasters' invite distrust when there are failures of preparation, warning, protection, or recovery (Imperiale & Vanclay, 2021). Distrust is a primary reason for opposition to a proposed action, expressed in doubts about the adequacy of its review, safety, the authenticity and effectiveness of proposed mitigations, and guarantees of long-term responsibility by the proponent and regulator (Edelstein, 1992).
- **Environmental stigma:** The contamination or degradation of an environment tends to devalue not only the setting, but also those people associated with it. Social and environmental stigma are closely related. Socially marginalised people are often found in stigmatised environments, and places inhabited by marginalised people are prone to stigmatising environmental change, both of which are indicators of environmental injustice (Bullard, 1990). Once stigmatised, environments are in perpetual jeopardy because one stigmatising event invites another (Edelstein, 1991, 1993, 2001, 2004).

Lifestyle

Lifestyle, which is about the normal, daily patterns of behaviour, is also impacted by environmental turbulence, resulting in temporary and permanent changes. People are forced or advised to alter their activities to reduce their risk and deal with new realities. For example, people may be resettled, or may not be able to drink water from their water wells, or may have to stop fishing as a source of livelihood. They may have to evade or cope with noxious or unpleasant stimuli such as dust, odours, noise, vibration, or blasting. They may have to adjust to ill health, and they may have to divert considerable time to crisis management. Significant lifestyle alterations will have flow-on consequences for lifescape and lifestrain. In response to impacts from projects or disasters, people often have to face a complex array of lifestyle alterations. For example, they may have to: face away from their showers to avoid getting contaminated water on their faces; remember not to wash their fruit and vegetables in tap water; keep tabs on their supply of delivered water; lift heavy water containers; and remember to order more water before they run out. In one community where the soil was contaminated with arsenic and other heavy metals, parents had to: prevent their children from playing in the backyard; make sure they removed their shoes before entering the home; keep the children and all of their toys off the floor; bathe the children daily; change their bedclothes nightly; and

vacuum and mop constantly. In another community, where radon gas was found at dangerous levels in people's basements, people became afraid to go downstairs, neglecting their laundry and other activities (Edelstein & Makofske, 1998). These necessary adjustments to normal behaviour were a constant reminder of the abnormality and danger present in the immediate environment. People had to retrain themselves, and instruct their families and guests about what to do as missteps would mean increased exposure to hazards.

Lifestrain

Lifestrain refers to the stress imposed by environmental turbulence, how successfully people cope with it, and any consequences of this for their emotional health. It reflects the coping resources of the affected population, as well as the resilience and adaptive capacity of individuals, social networks, neighbourhoods, communities, and regulatory agencies. Lifestrain is affected by a hazard's 'risk personality', i.e. the attributes that make it particularly dangerous, as well as its understood causes, consequences, and controllability, which collectively serve as the basis for assessing its risk. The experience of environmental turbulence is rarely voluntary and is often caused by human and institutional action or inaction. One must contend with the many emotions that occur during environmental turbulence, including dreaded anticipation, fear, surprise, shock, trauma, the realisation of harm and loss, and potentially grief. Recovery from environmental turbulence is a slow process, which brings about feelings of helplessness, disappointment, a sense of injustice, as well as anticipatory fears for the future. Changes in psychological wellbeing related to lifestrain may involve trauma, anxiety, depression, anger, hypochondria, paranoia, fear of cancer, and other forms of psychological and social dysfunction that often impede the ability to attain happiness and actualisation. There are clinical quantitative measures for many specific symptoms of lifestrain (Edelstein, 2004).

Lifestrain is also caused by the altered relational dynamics that arise from environmental turbulence. These include: the erosion of relationships, which is reflected in marital, neighbourly, or collegial tension; disappointment with one's social network and/or institutional protectors; discord with outsiders who don't understand what victims are going through or who lack empathy; forced dependence on the decisions of others who may not listen; being 'disabled' by forced dependence on expert knowledge; the experience of environmental stigma, blame, and other injustices; the need to face new roles and novel actions; and confronting community conflict resulting from how environmental turbulence differentially affects different interests (Edelstein, 2000, 2004).

PSYCHOSOCIAL IMPACTS AND COMMUNITY OPPOSITION

A local community hosting a facility perceived to be hazardous, or that will likely host a proposed project with potentially adverse consequences, will experience emotions like uncertainty, anxiety, fear, and anger. Even the news or rumour about a planned project is threatening, and can lead to various realistic and unrealistic concerns, and cause a sense of violation or dread (Vanclay, 2012). When people experiencing a common threat sense they are not being heard, believe their concerns are not addressed, and/or feel isolated or powerless, they often get together to protest, litigate, or testify against the project (Edelstein, 1992, 2004; Hanna et al., 2016). Such activism can be empowering (Rich et al., 1995). However,

participation and mobilisation also exacts potentially significant costs, demanding time, new learning, taking public action (perhaps for a first time), and a focus away from family, work, and/or other aspects of normal life. Activists risk being intimidated, sued, bullied, attacked, or even murdered.

When opposition fails, people may feel disappointment and dissatisfaction. They may also feel attacked, angry, frustrated, intimidated, unfairly punished, helpless, hopeless, powerless, let down by those they expected to be protective, and many other feelings associated with a loss of control over their lives and their ability to protect their families, home, place, and community (Edelstein, 1993, 2003, 2004; Scafuto & Edelstein, 2020). They may engage in blaming and become embroiled in intracommunity conflict. They may become estranged from their previous allies and their home and community. Families may pull together or break apart. People may give up, falling into apathy and alienation. These and other feelings are re-ignited when the adverse impacts are subsequently experienced (Edelstein, 2004). All these dynamics cause stress, sapping resilience and coping resources, potentially compounding existing or emergent psychological and physical health issues, as well as financial, relationship, and other issues, potentially leading to negative or destructive behaviours. The result is a destabilisation across so many aspects of life that healing, recovery, rebuilding, and establishing a new satisfying normalcy, become difficult (Edelstein, 2004; Gerhardstein et al., 2019).

HOW TO DETERMINE PSYCHOSOCIAL IMPACTS IN AN EX POST SITUATION

The use of qualitative methods is an appropriate way to study psychosocial impacts. This enables a flexible approach to engage with affected people in authentic and trusting conversations. A plethora of quantitative measures can be added for further confirmation of specific issues or for triangulation. However, on their own, standard quantitative approaches may miss unanticipated emergent issues, ask the wrong questions, ask questions in the wrong way, utilise the wrong sample, or seek to compare incomparable groups (Dunn et al., 1994). Furthermore, impacted groups are often too small for meaningful statistical comparison. A wrong sampling frame or confounding variables can distort or hide significant issues that might be present in the data. It is possible to involve clinical psychologists in research teams to use standard clinical assessments to diagnose psychosocial conditions in individuals. However, while this can be useful for confirming that mental health issues exist, this is not practical for large numbers of people (Edelstein, 2004).

A typical approach to researching psychosocial impacts would normally begin with familiarisation with the location by doing desktop research, and by having a tour of the impacted area, ideally guided by an affected person. After adequate preparation, a list of topics to guide the in-depth interviews is developed. This list is iteratively updated in response to things arising in the interviews. The interviews should only be conducted after informed consent is obtained (Vanclay et al., 2013). When appropriate and consented to, interviews can be audio or video recorded. However, it is good practice to take hand-written notes regardless of recording to cover the possibility of technological lapses.

In planning the interviews, a decision must be made about whether to interview people individually or in family or other groupings, with pros and cons for each strategy. The interaction created in group interviews often encourages active involvement and can be useful for

teasing-out divergent observations and stage-in-the-lifecycle and other differences. However, in some situations, group interviews may lead to guarded comments, or to a reluctance by some to speak up. Where no database exists upon which to base sampling in relation to key variables, snowballing is used to select informants, generally with an attempt to represent variables such as exposure and proximity to a hazard, or support or opposition for a project. In-depth interviews are best done in the interviewee's home, or at least in their community. This allows for a tour before or after the interview where the interviewee(s) point out things that are relevant. On the tour and/or during the interview, the PSIA researcher can refer to observations that confirm or contradict what they are being told. The ability to make acute observations is part of a practitioner's skill set.

An important aspect of PSIA is contrasting people's experience of turbulence against the baseline conditions that existed prior to the study. A standard interview format covers background and demographic information, and then walks step-by-step through the baseline livescape, lifestyle, and lifestrain, explores the experience and effect of the turbulent events themselves, and then goes systematically through the post-turbulence period up to the point of the interview, including expectations for what lies ahead. The questions follow the outline of the TET model. Rather than artificially constraining the discussion to fit a predetermined structure, the interview is treated as a conversation in which the interviewer listens to the interviewee and allows them to present their story as it makes sense to them, although with prompting as needed. In this way, the planned questions are generally all answered as and when they fit into the narrative, often without needing to be specifically asked. When the interviewee has finished their story, the interviewer can then ask any critical questions that were missed. The interviewer's role is to initiate a conversation, listen, gently curtail any lengthy tangents, prompt deeper answers, and invite the interviewee to share the goal of creating a thorough interview. Especially where people have experienced real harm, it is common for such interviews to last many hours, sometimes continuing in follow-up sessions. The interviewer has to listen carefully for interviewee exhaustion or distraction, and respect the need to take a break and/or close down. In Edelman's experience, even after being warned of a possible lengthy conversation, most people are willing to share their story and are generally not in a hurry to finish. Often, they have never had the opportunity to tell their story before, and the experience of telling it can be healing, or at least validating.

Near-verbatim transcripts of the interviews are created based on the audio or video recordings, and/or the notes taken during the interview. These transcripts are content coded according to the TET through cross-sectional analysis and are also read longitudinally following the structure of the interviewee's narrative. Credibility is assessed according to convergence between what an interviewee reports and: the documented facts; the experiences of others; and previous statements by the same interviewee. When there is a high volume of data, a computer-based qualitative analysis program can be used (e.g. ATLAS-ti, MaxQDA, NVivo).

SOME ISSUES TO CONSIDER

What is the Role of the PSIA Practitioner When They Discover People Who Are Traumatized?

Complex situations like environmental turbulence create a mix of emotional reactions of varying degrees of severity in the impacted population. When doing PSIA research, the practitioner is inserting themselves into people's lives. Sometimes, situations arise where the discussion brings unpleasant memories back to the interviewee, and all the emotional baggage that comes with them. During interviews, a practitioner is likely to be told things that are deeply disturbing to share and to hear, including stories about severe illnesses, deceased children or other loved ones, young couples who are afraid to have children because of toxic exposure, people forced to leave their homes and communities, and anger directed to those who were responsible for causing the problem, not fixing it, or who failed to help. With these stories, a practitioner will encounter a great deal of emotion and emotional behaviour, including tears, screams of anguish or anger, agitation, chain smoking, etc. This emotion is data worth noting as it confirms the narrative. But the practitioner is also in a reciprocal encounter with the interviewee and must do more than just collect data. Fortunately, interviewees nearly always report that in-depth interviews are cathartic and help them deal with their emotional involvement in the issue. However, sometimes the encounter exposes individuals who are highly disturbed, even to the point of potentially causing harm to themselves or others, and need urgent help. However, it is not the PSIA researcher's job nor is it appropriate for them to do therapy or to have therapeutic relationships with interviewees. But, it is the responsibility of the practitioner to make sure that any mental health crises arising from or discovered during an interview is referred to appropriate sources for assistance. Before going into an impacted community, it is appropriate to contact available clinical services and alert them to the study, find out if they have experience working with people impacted by the turbulence under study, draw on recommendations they may have, and find out how the practitioner and/or interviewees can seek help if needed. With this preparation, at the end of each interview, interviewers should ask whether anything discussed was disturbing and whether follow-up is needed. If so, the distressed interviewees can be given appropriate contacts. If professional help is urgently required, the practitioners should make a direct referral to the appropriate clinical services.

Does a PSIA Practitioner Take Sides? Should They Exhibit Empathy or Not? Should They Defend the Project if the Person is Mistaken?

The PSIA researcher must maintain objectivity and neutrality. Their role is not advocacy, project promotion, or opposition. However, neutrality does not mean indifference. During in-depth interviews, an empathetic demeanour is necessary. An interview is a conversation that requires reciprocity. When emotions are being shared, respect and understanding must be conveyed. The interviewer is there to have a genuine authentic conversation with the interviewee, not just to prompt, listen, and record. When the interviewee states incorrect information, whether to correct it or not requires an important judgment call by the practitioner. If it is immaterial to the assessment, there is no reason not to set the record straight. If the error reflects how the person understands the situation, then it usually should be left standing. The interviewer is not there to correct their errors, nor tell the interviewee what to think or how

they should react. Instead, such information is data to be collected, and the interviewee should be respected for sharing their views. However, there may be times when tempered scepticism is called for as a useful way to prompt the interviewee to elaborate or defend their position.

How Can a PSIA Researcher Determine If They Are Being Misled?

As with all social research, a PSIA researcher needs to assure they are not misled into exaggerating or minimising the impacts, or into misrepresenting a situation. There are steps that can be taken to avoid this. Doing in-depth interviews enables opportunities to identify and discuss contradictions or statements without foundation. The interviewer should take note of these points as they arise, and use follow-up questions to tease them out. In interviews with groups of people, the interviewer can ask others what they think of a potentially contestable issue. Interviews done in situ often allow for confirmation with physical evidence and/or any documentary material or photos that people might have. Cross-referencing across multiple sources allows for identifying factual discrepancies. The PSIA researcher can also conclude the data collection with interviews with some carefully chosen key informants and discuss any discrepancies that arose during the research. Where discrepancies remain, the researcher needs to investigate whether these are due to divergent but authentic views or experiences, or whether any of the accounts are misleading. Overall, if enough data is present from enough sources, if various forms of triangulation or confirmation are available, and if interviews are internally consistent and the result of authentic conversations, one can be reasonably sure of the data.

SOME EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS THAT HAVE TRIGGERED PSYCHOSOCIAL IMPACTS

A Coal Mine in South Africa

The Tendele coal mine in Somkhele, Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa, has had many psychosocial and other social impacts on nearby communities since the mine began operations in 2009 (this example is adapted from Edelstein, 2018; Barnwell, 2022; Benya, 2022). It has been alleged that the mine fenced off large portions of local farmers' lands without prior notice or their consent, converting a tranquil rural scenic environment into a vast industrial landscape, contaminating the watertable with heavy metals, and producing large quantities of dust that covers everything. Local people, especially women, have experienced many social impacts. For example, the local environment has been rendered unsafe and toxic, with dust covering all surfaces including collected rainwater, crops, food, and surface water. There is intense noise pollution, and contamination of air, water, and soil. The vistas have been spoilt by piles of rocks and coal sludge. The formerly beautiful landscape against the Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Game Reserve has been converted into a moonscape devoid of life, without any prospect of hazard abatement or restoration. There has been a general decline in health, notably increasing rates of asthma and other lung conditions from particulate exposure. Livelihoods have been severely impaired in the following ways: the area available for grazing and farming has been significantly reduced; there is contamination of the remaining land; death of cattle and the withering of crops has occurred; and many small businesses have been affected by the collapse of their

customer base. This has caused unemployed and impoverishment. Food and water now have to be purchased. With limited access to water resources, the level of sanitation has declined. All this has created many psychosocial impacts. There has been a loss of personal and community control arising from the erection of fences, disturbance of sacred burial sites, exposure to environmental hazards, reduction in safety including at home, and an unresponsive government and tribal council. Many people have been relocated from their traditional communal homesteads to shoddy replacement houses, which has shattered families and neighbourly and community relations. Communal areas and sacred places have been desecrated. For those people who remained in proximity to the mine, blasting has cracked the walls of houses and has caused severe distress.

Significant lifescape impacts have occurred. For example, social distrust and intracommunity conflict have divided the community. Distrust has been directed at the traditional leaders who had quietly approved the mine without community consultation, and who had allowed the relocation of gravesites, which resulted in the mingling of remains. Division has occurred between those people who accepted jobs with the mining company and those who lost their work because of the mine, and between those who were relocated and/or compensated and those left behind empty-handed. There has been violence against anti-mine activists. Distrust of the mine's operators has resulted from its alleged evasion and violation of environmental rules, use of dangerous practices, disregard of residents and their traditions, inadequate community benefits, failure to meet promises, poor communication with residents, harassment of opponents, denial of responsibility for harm, and for instigating community conflict. Finally, an environmental stigma has become evident with the degradation of people, place, and property, resulting in the 'perpetual jeopardy' of attracting more stigmatising projects, as evidenced by the proliferation of additional mining proposals nearby.

Many lifestyle impacts have also occurred. Previously, local people were deeply connected to the land and continued the practices of their ancestors. However, the mine and its waste areas have cut them off from their previous hunting and foraging grounds. Therefore, formerly self-sufficient agriculturalists have now sold off their livestock, which they could no longer feed or water. Now, there are no longer any surpluses of produce to sell for cash at the market and farmers have found it difficult to feed their families. Medicinal plants can no longer be collected. Now they need to purchase firewood and potable water. The consequences of all this have included social isolation and conflict, loss of barter and trade, alienation from the land, and widespread poverty. All these changes contributed to a loss of community, social cohesion, and cultural practices.

Significant lifestrain has been cumulatively caused by all these undesired adaptations and adjustments, including: the stresses associated with mine operations; fear for self and children; the stigma of being passive victims; and feelings of being violated by the coal mine. People had a strong sense of injustice and of being wronged, as well as feelings of unnecessary and unfair loss. The belief that one has been exposed to toxic contaminants was an additional stressor that caused psychological impacts such as generalised anxiety, psychosomatic symptoms, depression, and helplessness. People's separation from ancestral burial sites and the disturbance or destruction of graves was deeply harmful to people's psychological wellbeing.

Gasquakes in Groningen, the Netherlands

Conventional gas has been commercially extracted from the Groningen gasfield, in which some 190,000 people live, since 1963 (this example is adapted and updated from van der Voort & Vanclay, 2015). For many decades, gas extraction had been hailed as a relatively environmentally friendly, socially benign activity that annually yielded billions of euros to the Dutch state. Although some surface subsidence had been predicted, it was presumed that this would occur without affecting buildings. However, in the 1980s and into the 1990s, minor earthquakes (gasquakes) began to be experienced. This ‘induced seismicity’ increased exponentially in frequency into the 2000s and 2010s, with an increasing number of stronger tremors causing major damage to houses and other buildings. At first, the operator, NAM (a partnership between Shell, ExxonMobil, and the Dutch state), denied responsibility. Following a 3.6 earthquake in August 2012, the national supervisory body published a report in January 2013 indicating that it was likely there would be more frequent and stronger earthquakes than previously experienced or expected, and that there was a 7 per cent chance of a 4.0 or higher earthquake in the next 12 months. This report resulted in considerable alarm in the local population. Since 2013, there have been an increasing number of gasquakes, and by late 2022, more than 1,000 recorded tremors had been recorded, resulting in more than 245,000 damage claims and the pre-emptive demolition of more than 3,300 buildings. There has been a protracted process of negotiation around responsibility and arrangements for compensation. The procedure for making claims was excessively bureaucratic, adding to the stress experienced by local people, as well as their resentment and anger against the operator and the government.

The main psychosocial impacts experienced by local people related to the structural damage to houses and what this means for their sense of security in their homes, trust in government, anger, sense of justice, aspirations about the future, and levels of continually aggravated stress. Even if only a minor crack or a wall tile falling off, the physical damage to houses had an amplifying effect in that it affected the sense of home as being a place of safety and calm, and it was a visual, in-the-face reminder that new quakes might occur at any time and that there could be greater harm in the future. People no longer felt that they had a future in their community. They suffered an inversion of home, with some wanting to leave but stuck in place because of declining house prices and an inability to sell. Blame for what has happened has been directed towards the gas company, but even more so to the government that allowed the extraction, failed to prevent the resulting danger, and then further failed to adequately help those who have been harmed. The inadequate response from the government and the gas company has made them angry and has caused feelings of being harmed and treated unfairly and discriminated against. What was once a vibrant region for life and livelihood has been undermined, rendering it undesirable for either.

In late 2013, the Chair of the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights wrote to the Dutch Minister for Economic Affairs to advise him that these impacts potentially constituted a violation of the right, under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, to respect for private and family life and home. The public letter argued that the gasquakes were a negative influence on the health and peace of mind of local people, on their enjoyment of living, and to their right to undisturbed family life within their homes. The letter concluded with a reminder that: based on the positive obligation of the state to guarantee the right to safety, health, and private life of residents, the Minister must ensure that the human rights impact of gas extraction had a clear place in the consideration of possible solutions to the gasquake problem.

CONCLUSION

Psychosocial impacts are the subset of the social impacts arising from projects, disasters, and unwanted change that specifically relate to the mental health, psychological wellbeing, and emotions of people. Conceptually, psychosocial impacts has always been part of social impact assessment, even though they have been under-considered. Given the significance of psychosocial wellbeing to people affected by projects, it is critical that SIA practitioners pay much more attention to psychosocial impacts, and that robust ways for considering them be developed and implemented in SIA practice. Although people's resilience and coping strategies are a factor in the experience of psychosocial impacts, far more fundamental is the social and environmental performance of a project, and the genuineness, meaningfulness, and effectiveness of the project's engagement with local communities.

There are some fundamental truths about projects that are worth repeating (Vanclay, 2012). First, all projects – even projects intended to be in the public interest or those that are managed very well – have the potential to cause harm because of the psychosocial and other impacts they might inadvertently create. Inevitably, all projects make changes to people's lifeworlds, which people have to deal with. Inescapably, this creates some degree of disruption, stress, and distress. Another fundamental truth is that planned projects create psychosocial impacts the moment that there are rumours about them, especially if it is an unwanted project, or a project without social acceptance. Furthermore, psychosocial impacts can be triggered by the perceptions that people conject, which can be based on misinformation. Nevertheless, perception is reality because people feel and react to what they believe to be true or a possibility. Therefore, projects need to be mindful about how they engage with communities and about the information they release, and they need to monitor and engage with responses from communities that derive from their information or about the project in general.

To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, projects are needed, and hopefully all future projects will contribute to better outcomes for communities. However, projects must be implemented in ways that do not impose undue harm or distress on local communities. People do have a human right to have a peaceful existence, to be safe in their family home, to be free of inappropriate intrusion and disruption, and to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment. Project proponents and project staff should imagine what it would be like to be the recipient of a project in the community. What would they feel if they were in the frontline or at the coalface? Clearly, there needs to be much better management of all social and psychosocial issues.

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19. Understanding stakeholders and their influence

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THE PROACTIVE STAKEHOLDER

Social impact assessments (SIAS) examine impacts on persons, groups, and organisations. By virtue of being impacted, they become stakeholders. The *Oxford Dictionary* (Oxford Reference, 2021, online) defines ‘stakeholder’ as, ‘All those with interests in an organization; for example, as shareholders, employees, suppliers, customers, or members of the wider community (who could be affected by environmental consequences of an organization’s activities).’ The source of the impact can be a policy or project promoted by any organisation.

The aim of this chapter is to review conceptual tools for understanding how stakeholders are likely to impact either the project or the prioritisation of the impacts and mitigations associated with the project. Some stakeholders assume they have little influence over policies or projects and therefore passively wait for benevolent authorities to appreciate and mitigate the impacts they perceive themselves to be experiencing. SIA analysts need tools to help identify and engage such stakeholders. Other stakeholders raise their voices and get themselves organised, often on the assumption that the authorities are not so benevolent. In still other cases, an existing political elite takes the initiative to prioritise the impacts and campaign for their favoured mitigations. They engage in policy politics, in the broadest sense. Identifying and engaging with politically active stakeholders requires analytic frameworks that take account of stakeholders’ power, influence, and policy positions. The tools for analysing stakeholder political activity come from multiple academic and applied disciplines, including strategic management, political science, sociology, and project management. I begin with definitions of ‘stakeholder’ and ‘social acceptance’. Then, tools that rely on categorising stakeholders on politically relevant dimensions are reviewed. This is followed by an examination of network-oriented approaches that reveal coalitions, influence patterns, and changes to policy narratives.

MUTUAL STAKEHOLDERSHIP

An early proponent of stakeholder theory in management strategy, R. Edward Freeman (1984, p. 46) defined a stakeholder as ‘any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives.’ Freeman acknowledged that many who can affect an organisation are also affected by the organisation, but also that there are some who only affect it, and others who are only affected by it. Freeman justified including those who are only affected by noting that those groups typically eventually find their voices and gain capacity to affect the organisation. Therefore, prudent strategic management also takes account of those who are only affected. Freeman appears to include potential effects when he says, ‘to be responsive (and effective in the long run) you must deal with those groups that you *can* affect’ (1984, p. 46, emphasis added). Subsequent theorists have discussed ‘normative’ stake-

holder theory, wherein taking account of risks imposed on stakeholders is not only prudent but ethical and socially responsible (e.g., Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Hendry, 2001; Phillips et al., 2003). In this view, those at risk of being affected are also stakeholders. For example, the operators of a hydroelectric dam ought to count downstream riverside residents as stakeholders simply because they could be flooded in the event of a seismic event large enough to damage the dam. Similarly, but on the positive impact side of the coin, those local residents who are unemployed or who work in low-paying jobs are stakeholders of any proposed project that would create a significant demand for local workers at their skill level.

Freeman differentiated the stakeholder approach to management from the shareholder approach. In the shareholder approach, the only responsibility of business is to make a profit for shareholders within the confines of what is legally permitted (Friedman, 1970). This approach assumes an effective and vigilant government monitoring the activities of business with the aim of protecting stakeholders. Stakeholder theory, by contrast, portrays government as poorly equipped and insufficiently motivated to play such a role in a large diverse economy and therefore shifts some of the responsibility to business itself. At the same time, the stakeholder approach recognises that stakeholders are not necessarily passive recipients of impacts, devoid of their own agency. They too can hold businesses accountable through a wide variety of tactics and strategies (Hanna et al., 2016; Nguyen et al., 2018).

In recent decades, the term stakeholder has been generalised beyond the business context. Not only do governments and civic sector organisations have stakeholders (Morrison, 2014), but projects of all organisations (Walker et al., 2008) and even non-organisations can have stakeholders. It is also common to hear governments talk of multi-stakeholder consultations on shared problems. Civic sector advocacy groups call for multi-stakeholder collaboration on issues that cannot be resolved by any single organisation. Thus, even problems can have stakeholders (Gray, 1989; Turcotte & Pasquero, 2001).

One of the implications of the generalisation of the stakeholder concept outside the business context is that stakeholders now have their own stakeholders. Viewing stakeholder relations from the many perspectives of multiple mutual stakeholders complicates the problem of prioritising impacts because impacts have repercussions on the stakeholders of stakeholders. The result is a dynamic interlocking network of impacts and narratives about those impacts (Besiou et al., 2013; Ehrlich, 2022). This is a challenge to which social network analysis is well suited (Mische & Pattison, 2000). Therefore, after reviewing the approaches to stakeholder analysis that depend heavily on categorisation, this chapter explores approaches incorporating social network analysis.

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSES TO GAIN SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE

In the most generic sense, stakeholder analysis is a process of describing the characteristics of stakeholders and their stakes. Stakeholder analysis provides insights that lead to effective strategies for reducing net negative impacts. In so doing, it helps improve the level of social acceptance for the project, proposal, or policy in question. Social acceptance is sometimes called the ‘social licence to operate’ (Joyce & Thomson, 2000) or social legitimacy (Morrison, 2014). The term ‘social licence to operate’ first gained widespread currency in the mining industry (Cooney, 2017) and was later abbreviated to simply ‘social licence’ so that it could apply to projects that were in the pre-operational or post-operational stages (Thomson et al.,

2010; Bice, 2014). The term is now applied in many different industries and sectors (e.g., Morrison, 2014; Florini & Pauli, 2018) where social acceptance is important. Social acceptance is becoming an increasingly important element of SIA (Sinclair et al., 2022).

In its simplest form, stakeholder analysis in an SIA produces a list of stakeholders with their associated impacts, whether positive versus negative impacts, or experienced versus anticipated impacts. However, SIAs increasingly must address the question of the social acceptance of the project or policy in question. The contribution that stakeholder analysis can make to that goal is to illuminate the political dynamics, such as political coalitions and social movements, that do or could facilitate or block implementation of any project or policy recommendation.

GETTING INFORMATION ON THE STAKEHOLDERS

The frameworks for stakeholder analysis reviewed here use data that can be collected in many different ways. Examples of data collection techniques can be found in Boutilier (2011), or in Chapter 29. The process of getting information on who the stakeholders are and what their concerns are can progress through successive levels of certainty and accuracy. The quickest but least robust level is to write down one's impressions of the stakeholders while using one of the frameworks to organise those impressions. Slightly more robust is simply holding an internal meeting to share knowledge about the stakeholders and their attributes that are relevant to the chosen framework. The next level beyond that is usually a set of interviews with stakeholders. At the most participatory level, information is obtained through stakeholder collaboration in the impact assessment process. It is not the purpose of this chapter to review all data collection options. Suffice to say that they include monitoring stakeholder posts to social media, content-analysing stakeholder statements in whatever medium, interviewing stakeholders through some channel of communication, and collaborating with stakeholders as co-producers of the SIA report.

THE CATEGORISATION APPROACH

Much of the theory and practice on stakeholder analysis originated in the field of management scholarship, particularly strategy (Freeman, 1984) and external affairs (Miles, 1987). A thread of scholarship has also emerged from the field of project management (Turner et al., 1996) and public administration (Papadopoulos & Merali, 2008). The dimensions of stakeholder characteristics that have been nominated as indicators of which stakeholders should get which relationship orientation generally invoke some versions of the stakeholder's influence or power, the stakeholder's motivation to act, and the stakeholder's level of support or opposition for the project whose impacts are being assessed.

These approaches generally take the perspective of the project proponent and offer guidance for overcoming the challenges that stakeholders may present to project advancement. To those committed to stakeholder engagement and collaboration, these approaches appear to take a somewhat defensive stance towards stakeholders and their complaints. They are reviewed here as a reminder that there are situations in which stakeholders' demands can do more damage to the collective welfare of the community than any impact of the proposed project. An understanding of approaches that help manage such circumstances gives SIA analysts

a more robust and complete toolkit. This section reviews the more prominent and representative typologies of stakeholders that have been proposed to assist managers with external relations responsibilities.

Communications with Stakeholders

Turner et al. (1996) proposed three dimensions for classifying stakeholders of projects. The first was support for, versus opposition to, the project. The second was the amount of influence wielded by the stakeholders. These two are frequently included in classification systems. The third dimension was more original. It was the stakeholder's level of 'awareness and knowledge'. The awareness and knowledge dimension was deemed an important input to the level of support and to the stakeholder's eventual satisfaction with a project. Turner and colleagues viewed every project as an attempt to introduce change into the lives of stakeholders, and thus as an exercise in change management. Drawing on the social psychology of persuasion and social marketing, Turner (2009) recommended communicating about the project before rumours about it started circulating among stakeholders. A lack of official information tends to get interpreted as an attempt to hide something, and that by itself often turns stakeholders against the project, a point also emphasised by Vanclay (2012) in the SIA context.

Turner used a twofold classification system to categorise stakeholders. On one dimension, they were either knowledgeable or ignorant, while on the other, they were either supportive or opposed. He recommended continually informing the knowledgeable supporters and educating the ignorant supporters. Turner viewed knowledgeable opponents as having the capacity for rational dialogue and negotiation, but despaired that not much could be done with ignorant opponents who had already made up their minds.

The approach taken by Turner and colleagues presupposes general agreement on the facts pertinent to the project. They assumed that facts were indisputable, and they proposed that stakeholders can either 'know' the facts, or not. The belief that there are statements about controversial projects that are accepted by all who hear them (i.e., facts) has become more difficult to apply in practice since the advent of social media news sources, deep fakes, twitterbots, cyberwarfare, and the political capture of traditional news media. Research shows that trust in institutions (GlobeScan, 2020; Brenan, 2021) and deference to authority (Nevitte, 1996) has been declining, which makes it more difficult for a project's 'experts' to have their construals go unchallenged.

In contrast, Fletcher et al. (2003) approached communications with stakeholders from the stakeholder's perspective first. They advised asking what is important to the stakeholder. They expressed it as ranking of stakeholder values. Their analysis involved grouping stakeholders based on their issues of primary concern. The groupings simplify communications and engagement initiatives by reducing them to common themes. The groupings have to be reassessed for each issue or 'value' because some stakeholders will have an interest in one issue but not another.

Stakeholder Acceptance of the Project

Savage et al. (1991) proposed a two-fold classification system for stakeholders that included criteria for rating each stakeholder's potential for threatening the project and for collaborating with it. The 'potential for threat' dimension took account of the stakeholder's control of key

resources needed by the project (e.g., capital/financing, labour, physical access, raw inputs, permits, etc.). Savage et al. also recognised that part of the potential to pose a threat was the relative power of the stakeholder compared with the power of the proponent. The ‘potential for cooperation’ dimension was a combination of favourability towards the focal organisation and propensity to take supportive or non-supportive action. In addition, the stakeholder’s likelihood of forming a coalition with the focal organisation versus other stakeholders, if anyone at all, was deemed a contributor to the stakeholder’s overall potential for threat or cooperation.

Savage et al.’s (1991) joint criteria of threat potential versus cooperative potential created four categories of stakeholders: supportive, marginal, non-supportive, and mixed blessing. The ‘supportive’ stakeholder is high on cooperative potential and low on threat potential. Savage et al. recommended engaging these stakeholders and motivating them to show their support. The ‘marginal’ stakeholder is low on both threat and cooperative potential. The recommendation was simply to monitor this stakeholder for any signs of a change in status. The ‘non-supportive’ stakeholder was high on threat potential and low on cooperative potential, and therefore a defensive approach was recommended, which might include trying to reduce dependence on the vital resources controlled or influenced by that stakeholder. Finally, the ‘mixed blessing’ stakeholder was high on both threat and cooperative potential. The strategy recommended here was collaboration, with the aim of eventually reducing the likelihood of threatening behaviour from this stakeholder.

Focus on Satisfying Ambivalent Stakeholders

In an approach similar to Savage et al. (1991), d’Herbement and Cesar (1998) proposed a stakeholder classification system with the dimensions of synergy and antagonism. Synergy refers to how much energy the stakeholder has to support a project, while antagonism refers to the energy they have to oppose it. D’Herbement and Cesar focused on the same question that social licence to operate models address, namely, the level of support or opposition. They reasoned that stakeholders can be both for and against a project at the same time, and thus, ambivalent about the project.

D’Herbement and Cesar (1998) differed from Savage et al. (1991) in how they treated the two-dimensional space. Instead of using it to define four boxes, they viewed it as a space to be mapped. In the two-dimensional space created by the synergy and antagonism continuums, they mapped eight uniquely shaped categories of stakeholders with a different strategy for dealing with each one. When either synergy or antagonism dominate, the stakeholder is more likely to be either a supportive ‘zealot’ or a ‘mutineer’ opponent. Perhaps the most valuable insight contained in their model was that many stakeholders are classifiable as ‘waverers’ because their level of synergy matches their level of antagonism. In this state of ambivalence, they become prime strategic targets for persuasion and negotiation.

D’Herbement and Cesar (1998) also identified six patterns of behaviour on the part of project proponents that can work against the advancement of the project. They were patterns like paying too much attention to the loudest voices, stereotyping stakeholders, ignoring the critical stakeholders, doing nothing, blaming others, and acting frenetically without following any plan. Since d’Herbement and Cesar published this list, more thorough analyses have been developed about how project proponents inadvertently reduce social acceptance for their projects. Zandvliet and Anderson (2009) produced a guide for avoiding such missteps in mining

projects. Later, Vanclay and Hanna (2019) offered a comprehensive and concise list, along with a list of approaches for improving social acceptance.

The Evolution of Social Licence to Operate Models

Social licence to operate is commonly referred to as simply ‘social licence’ (e.g., Bice, 2014; Morrison, 2014; Cooney, 2017). It is relevant to SIA because one of the main objectives of SIA is to reduce impacts and to increase benefits in a way that is acceptable to stakeholders. Accordingly, social acceptance, broadly conceived, was an element of the analytic frameworks proposed by Turner et al. (1996), d’Herbemont and Cesar (1998), and Murray-Webster and Simon (2007).

The stakeholders granting or withholding social licence (i.e., accepting or rejecting the project) might be the general public in a community or in a broader jurisdiction. However, given the influence of elite minorities and well-organised non-elite minorities (Moscovici, 1976), it is also important to gain acceptance from influential coalitions of stakeholders. It is possible for a project to be stopped even though a majority of stakeholders support it, that is, grant it a social licence (e.g., Boutilier & Thomson, 2018, p. 116). Likewise, a project can go ahead when a majority oppose it, that is, without a social licence, given the use of force and violence. However, by definition, there are no cases in which the project proponent decides to grant itself a social licence, even though they may sometimes try to improve their chances by making performative statements about having a social licence (Boutilier, 2021).

Thomson and Boutilier (2011) presented a model of social licence with four levels that are separated by three perceptual criteria. The lowest criterion is the perceived legitimacy of the project. Without legitimacy, the social licence is withheld or retracted. If the stakeholder sees the project as legitimate but doubts the credibility of the management, the project will likely be tolerated or accepted. This lowest level of granted social licence implies that there will be many pending questions to be answered. There will likely also be unresolved complaints and feelings of ambiguity. However, the stakeholder is likely to be willing to let the project proceed to see if the problems get resolved. If the stakeholder accepts the credibility of the management but still does not have full trust, the level of social licence granted is approval or support. At this level, the stakeholder will defend the project and is generally resistant to attempts by opponents to organise protests or blockades. Finally, usually after a number of years, the stakeholder can come to believe the project management will reasonably take account of their interests when making decisions. This mutual trust allows for ‘psychological identification’ in the sense of both parties perceiving their present and future well-being as depending on mutual collaboration. Thomson and Boutilier (2011) recommended stakeholder engagement and mutual collaboration as the guiding principles to improve social licence.

Luke (2017) extended Thomson and Boutilier’s framework on the withheld side. She took account of the common phenomenon of polarisation over project proposals. The polarisation has associated arguments and narratives that aim to affect the acceptance or rejection of the project or policy. In Luke’s model, there are just as many levels opposing a project as there are supporting it. Accordingly, in Luke’s model, the extreme of withholding a social licence is psychological identification with a resistance movement.

In terms of classifying stakeholders, both the Thomson and Boutilier model and Luke’s model propose dividing what is essentially a continuum of acceptance or rejection into somewhat arbitrary categories for analytic purposes (Boutilier & Thomson, 2018). The social

Table 19.1 The eight stakeholder categories of Mitchell et al. (1997) based on three attributes

Stakeholder label	Power	Legitimacy	Urgency
Definitive	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dominant	Yes	Yes	No
Dangerous	Yes	No	Yes
Dormant	Yes	No	No
Dependent	No	Yes	Yes
Discretionary	No	Yes	No
Demanding	No	No	Yes
Non-stakeholder	No	No	No

licence can be measured at the individual level, which means it can be averaged for sub-groups of stakeholders. That is useful when the stakeholders form coalitions or movements, or when they belong to distinct social units like villages or municipalities. Of course, the scores can also be averaged for a whole project, although that risks masking any polarisation that might exist.

Three-Dimensional Analyses

Mitchell et al. (1997) developed a three-dimensional typology of stakeholders to explain why managers give more attention to some stakeholders than others, but also to help managers decide which stakeholders should get more attention. The classification system was based on three attributes: the stakeholder's power to influence; the legitimacy of each stakeholder's relationship with the proponent's organisation; and the urgency of the stakeholder's claim on the organisation. Each attribute was deemed present or absent in combination with the presence or absence of the other two attributes. The combinations created a total of eight categories (Table 19.1). The more attributes a stakeholder has, the more salient the stakeholder is, or should be, to managers. However, rather than recommend a different strategic response to each category, they give examples of how each attribute can increase the stakeholder's salience to managers. Mitchell et al. (1997) emphasised that the attributes should be assessed on an issue-by-issue basis. For example, an environmental group might have a different combination of the three attributes depending on whether the issue is the project's impact on biodiversity versus the project's impact on local wages. Moreover, a stakeholder's attributes can change across time.

From the field of project management, Walker et al. (2008) proposed several non-quantitative heuristics for visualising stakeholder categories and stakeholder issues. They recommended using recursive consultations with the project team to prioritise stakeholders on three dimensions: power, urgency, and proximity. The power and urgency dimensions were the same as two of Mitchell et al.'s dimensions but instead of legitimacy, Walker et al. proposed proximity to the project. Walker et al. also recommended an additional analysis before engaging stakeholders. It combined the stakeholder's level of support for the project with their receptiveness to messages about it.

Table 19.2 *The eight stakeholder categories of Murray-Webster & Simon (2006) based on three dimensions*

Stakeholder label	Power / influence	Interest (motivation)	Attitude (support)	Corresponding strategy
Saviour	High	High	High	Keep satisfied
Saboteur	High	High	Low	Engage so that they disengage
Sleeping giant	High	Low	High	Engage so that they get involved
Time bomb	High	Low	Low	Understand, defuse
Friend	Low	High	High	Use as confidant
Irritant	Low	High	Low	Engage so that they disengage
Acquaintance	Low	Low	High	Keep informed
Trip wire	Low	Low	Low	Understand to avoid tripping up

Which Powerful Stakeholders Would Act For or Against?

Another three-dimensional framework was proposed by Murray-Webster and Simon (2006, 2007). Their dimensions were power, interest, and attitude. The power dimension was like the power and influence attribute in the models by Mitchell et al. (1997) and Walker et al. (2008). Interest was essentially being impacted by the project and/or being motivated to take action regarding the issues. It overlaps with urgency in the models by Mitchell et al. and Walker et al. The attitude dimension is the stakeholder's support for, or opposition to, the project or policy, which is similar to the dimensions emphasised in the models by Savage et al. (1991), d'Herbement and Cesar (1998), and the social licence models. Murray-Webster and Simon's three dimensions were dichotomised and therefore yielded eight categories of stakeholders (see Table 19.2). The rightmost column of Table 19.2 shows the strategic recommendations regarding how to deal with each category. Note that there is no strategy in this framework that recommends trying to find common ground or changing the design of the project to reduce impacts. The impression is that relations with stakeholders are treated as a game that can only have one winner.

When Stakeholders' Attributes Depend on the Social Context

The frameworks reviewed thus far presume fixed categories, even though the authors sometimes warn that these need to be revised when issues and impacts change. One of the limits to the categorisation approach is that the quantity of an attribute possessed by a stakeholder can change depending on the social context. Here, I focus on the most-mentioned dimension, power, to illustrate this limitation.

Power might seem at first glance like something stakeholders can be said to have in different degrees. However, upon closer inspection, it appears to be a property of relationships rather than of persons or groups. Most of the analytic frameworks that mention power construe it as including influence. Sociologists have offered several definitions of power, most of which view it as a constellation of relationship qualities such as influence, dominance, and authority (Wrong, 1970). These overlaps create ambiguities in estimating a stakeholder's level of power. Moreover, stakeholders can have different levels of influence and authority in different social circles. For example, inside a social movement, a radical stakeholder may be very influential but not be taken seriously in the broader stakeholder network. Fortunately, the sociology of networks has shown that social influence can be measured by the quantity and quality

of network ties that a stakeholder has (Friedkin, 1991; Rowley, 1997). The stakeholder's influence, therefore, can be measured in both of these social contexts simply by restricting the network to members of the social movement, or by expanding it to the broader set of stakeholders in which the social movement operates. Taking a network approach allows the SIA analyst to estimate the stakeholder's influence in different subsets of social relationships. None of the categorisation frameworks make this important analysis explicit because they do not methodically bring network relationships into the analysis.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BALANCE OF POWER

Why Examine the Balance of Power Explicitly?

In any network of stakeholders, some have more power and social influence than others. Moreover, the SIA analyst also has more power and social influence than some stakeholders. While social hierarchies are necessary and natural (Boehm, 2001; Perret et al., 2020), there are certain patterns that obstruct the work of an SIA analyst. Foremost among these is the phenomenon that greater differentials in social influence produce a greater risk of distorted communications (Edmunds & Wolenberg, 2001; Holcombe et al., 2004). Distorted communications, in turn, can distort the picture presented by an SIA.

Savage et al. (1991) explicitly noted the importance of comparing the relative power of the stakeholder versus the focal organisation, but their purpose appeared to be to find out which stakeholders can be ignored in the interest of advancing the project. Similarly, d'Herbement and Cesar (1998) used labels like 'moaners' and 'mutineers' to describe stakeholders with low support for the project. Likewise, Murray-Webster and Simon (2006) used labels like 'irritant' and 'trip wire' to describe those who are low in power and oppose the project.

There are two problems with these approaches. First, they run the risk of accidentally and erroneously ignoring the less influential stakeholders while drawing the analyst's attention to those who already have power and the impacts that matter to them. There is no inquiry into the extent to which those with power faithfully represent the interests of those lower in the social influence hierarchy. Second, because these approaches treat groups of stakeholders as categories, they ignore the existence of communities and networks among stakeholders. This, in turn, ignores the relationships among stakeholders through which social influence flows and changes the power, attitude, and motivation of stakeholders. Although the categorisation frameworks acknowledge that stakeholders' attributes change, they fail to examine the patterns of relationship that produce those changes.

Is Stakeholder Empowerment Helpful?

Stakeholders need to communicate their preoccupations and concerns about impacts to the SIA analyst. At times, these are shared impacts, often at a neighbourhood or community level. However, it is not necessarily possible for communities to articulate or agree upon what impacts they experience and what should be done about them. In sociological terminology, they may be low in social capital. For example, agreement on norms for the present and goals for the future may be lacking. Empowerment at the community level consists of strengthening the connections among members, their mutual trust, and their cohesiveness. When that

happens, powerless communities find their voice. Then they are capable, for example, of giving free, prior, and informed consent. Communities of stakeholders with social capital in them are also more able to insist on their rights, as opposed to being ignored or marginalised. Changes in relationship patterns frequently produce changes in the balance of power among stakeholders and between stakeholder groups and the project proponent.

THE DYNAMIC NETWORK APPROACH

How Network Approaches Can Give Voice to the Periphery

Network approaches offer a perspective on stakeholders that facilitates calibrating how their influence and power vary by social context. It allows the SIA analyst to avoid confusing the preferences of the powerful with the variegated impacts on the whole community. Moreover, it can assess the capacity of groups and communities to articulate and prioritise their concerns. How does it do this?

Many types of relations and interactions among stakeholders can be used to create graphs of their network (e.g., shopping at the same store, talking to each other at least once per month). However, decades of sociological research have shown that the amount of social capital in their relationship is associated with a wide range of interesting attributes (Putnam, 2000; Fukuyama, 2001). These include health ratings (Chen & Meng, 2015), poverty versus prosperity levels (Krishna, 2001), career advancement (Burt et al., 2000), and citizenship behaviour (Bolino et al., 2002). Applying the social capital model of Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998), Boutilier (2009) suggested that the amount of social capital in a relationship can be measured as a combination of the mutual trust in the relationship and the extent to which the parties agree on shared goals. Both can be assessed using agree/disagree rating scales.

Summarising the research on social capital and community development, Woolcock (2002) identified three important patterns of social capital: bonding, bridging, and linking. These summarise the structural dimension of social capital in Nahapiet and Ghoshal's (1998) model. In terms of helping with SIA, bonding social capital (i.e., having many mutual relationships within a group) creates group consensus (Onyx & Bullen, 2000), which permits communities to articulate and prioritise the impacts and mitigations that are important to them. Bridging (i.e., having relations among different groups) creates inclusiveness and assembles more diverse knowledge and resources. Bridging social capital is exemplified by actors who take on roles as bridge builders, ambassadors, or brokers among groups, which for SIA can help avoid or reduce conflict among subgroups of stakeholders about the prioritisation of impacts and mitigations (Ganson et al., 2022). Linking (i.e., relationships with entities that operate on a larger geo-political scale) helps channel the flow of benefits for local stakeholder communities from the national and international level. For SIA, the project proponent itself is often one of those larger scale entities with whom communities can develop linking social capital.

The combinations of all these patterns of social capital result in many network configurations, including those characterised by infighting factions, militant opposition fronts, change-resistant sub-cultures, dominant elites with disproportionate power, and accountable leadership (Boutilier, 2011). When the relations among stakeholders are converted into network graphs, the SIA analyst can see and quantify the power differentials among stakeholders, both as individuals and as members of coalitions, which may be quite different.

This knowledge permits taking account of distortions in the dominant policy narrative about impacts, distortions that might arise from power differentials among stakeholders (Ingold, 2011).

There are two main advantages that the network approach adds over and above the benefits of frameworks based on categories of stakeholders. First, categories identify stakeholders with shared attributes but do not provide any information about the presence or absence of relationships among the stakeholders. Consider ten stakeholders in Murray-Webster and Simon's (2006) saboteur category. In one network structure, they may have no relationships with one another and may even be unaware of each other's existence. In a different network structure, they may have worked together to oppose other projects in the past and already know each other's motivations and capabilities. The latter network structure would give them a much greater ability to control the narrative about impacts immediately and forcefully. In a third possible network structure, they may be divided into three rival factions on the basis of some variable that the Murray-Webster and Simon (2006) framework did not anticipate. In this case, the SIA analyst would realise that three separate opposition coalitions may be promoting three rival narratives about the impacts. The network approach makes it possible to measure the extent to which stakeholders are separate groups, rival coalitions, or united fronts. This, in turn, lets the SIA analyst take account of the level of hegemony versus marginalisation among stakeholders themselves, with a corresponding boisterousness versus faintness of the narratives about impacts. The network approach also identifies which stakeholders are the core members of any narrative coalition, and therefore which ones have more potential to modify the opinions of the others.

A second additional benefit of the network approach is the insight it offers on why stakeholders move from one category to another. A time series of categorisations of stakeholders by attributes can show stakeholders moving from one category to another. A network approach that encodes the category information as attributes of the stakeholders' nodes on a network graph shows the same information. However, the network approach also shows the relationships among stakeholders, which are important predictors of such shifts (McAdam, 1986). Thus, it offers insights into the likely trajectory of support for narratives favouring or opposing the project.

Coalitions for or against a project are networks of ties among stakeholders. Collecting information on network ties makes visible the dynamism of relationship formation, strengthening, weakening, and cessation, all of which affect the future strength of a socio-political coalition (Ray et al., 2003; Walgrave & Ketelaars, 2019; Walgrave & Wouters, 2022). Snow and McAdam (2000) explain how association with members of social movement reshapes a person's identity and consequently changes their motivation to engage with specific issues, which would correspond to a move from one category to another on the interest dimension of Murray-Webster and Simon's (2006) framework. For the SIA analyst, this reveals how prospective modifications to the project, or mitigations of its impacts, might increase or reduce support for the project.

Understanding Impacts Entails Understanding the Narratives about Them

Impacts are perceived subjectively. Perceptions of impacts are embedded in narratives, and narratives are used to define and mobilise support or opposition to policy positions (Matti & Sandström, 2011; Weible et al., 2011). Indeed, stakeholders actively create or avoid relation-

ships based on policy preference similarity (Henry, 2011). Typologies of narrative components usually include an element or two related to impacts. Ostrom and Basurto (2011) categorised the parts of narratives in the shared resource policy processes. The parts were: actors; positions; control; information; outcomes; costs; and benefits. The latter three amount to impacts. Similarly, the Narrative Policy Framework (Jones et al., 2014) lists the elements of narratives as: setting; characters (villains and heroes); plot; and the moral of the story (i.e., moral lessons and recommendations). These approaches can help the SIA analyst avoid the error of assuming that impacts stand independently from the perceptions embedded in the narratives constructed by coalitions of stakeholders. Fully understanding an impact requires knowing the narrative in which it is embedded and who is promoting that narrative.

A more useful way of grouping stakeholders is not by categories based on attributes, but rather by network clusters based on both intergroup/interpersonal relationships and shared narratives (Boutilier, 2020). When taking account of the SIA's own impact on stakeholders, examining the stakeholder networks of the policy narratives they support can reveal otherwise hidden options for compromise and collaboration in polarised social contexts (e.g., Jackson-Inderberg & Bailey, 2019).

CONCLUSION

All stakeholder analysis starts with creating comprehensive lists of stakeholders and getting information about them. Between that step and the recommendations in the final SIA report, there are many attributions and distinctions made to help understand and prioritise impacts and their mitigation. This intermediate stage entails applying conceptual frameworks like those reviewed in this chapter. SIA is not the only field that requires stakeholder analysis, and therefore it is understandable that conceptual frameworks come from many different fields, with different assumptions about what aspects of stakeholders and their relations with one another are important. Generally, the early approaches tried to quickly categorise stakeholders and recommend different tactics to use in managing each category. These categories are defined by attributes of the stakeholders. A limitation of those approaches is that those attributes can change from one week to the next. More recent approaches recognise that stakeholders' attributes can change suddenly.

Categorical approaches often try to take account of the power or influence differences among stakeholders, but have difficulty including information on who has influence over whom. Recent approaches incorporating social network analysis show the social relationships in which this power or influence operates. This simultaneously provides a social context for understanding which issues, and in which social circles or policy coalitions, a stakeholder's influence will be strong or weak. Categorical approaches may encourage the analyst to classify stakeholders by the impact that affects the stakeholder the most, but risk missing the stakeholder's own perceptions of, and prioritisation of, the impacts. By examining network clusters and the narratives they endorse, SIA analysts can gain more insight into the aspects of the impacts that matter most to stakeholders themselves.

All the frameworks for stakeholder analysis that were reviewed in this chapter have something to offer. The more recent approaches view the socio-political environment surrounding the project from a more systemic perspective. This has the advantage of revealing the com-

plexity of the environment but requires more time and resources. The earlier approaches, if chosen with care, have the advantage of giving a rapid diagnosis with less investment.

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20. Community engagement, public participation and social impact assessment

Tanya Burdett

INTRODUCTION

Community engagement, which is also called public participation, is a key component of social impact assessment (SIA). However, although overlapping, the professional fields of practice of public participation and SIA are separate discourses and communities of practice. Although they share many goals and principles, and draw on similar techniques, they are pursued for different reasons. Put bluntly, SIA and public participation, though similar and related, are not the same (Vanclay et al., 2015). While SIA requires community engagement, public participation has a wide range of applications across many sectors. A lack of appreciation of this difference has led to the fields of SIA and public participation being conflated by various stakeholders.

SIA is the process of analysing and managing the social consequences arising from planned interventions (Vanclay, 2003; Esteves et al., 2012; Vanclay et al., 2015). While the terms ‘community engagement’ and ‘public participation’ are somewhat interchangeable (including in this chapter), for various reasons some practitioners have a preference for one or the other term. SIA practitioners generally prefer use of ‘community engagement’, whereas public participation professionals tend to use ‘public participation’. In an environmental impact assessment (EIA) context, ‘public participation’ is generally regarded as being the act of involving the individuals and groups who are positively or negatively affected by a proposed intervention that is subject to a formal decision-making process (André et al., 2006). Community engagement is regarded as being broader and refers to any attempt by a project or organisation to interact (engage) with its host communities and broader publics, irrespective of any formal requirement (OECD, 2017, 2022). It is important to realise that, while participation/engagement around projects may not be a formal requirement of national legislation in all countries, it is nevertheless a strong expectation or requirement of international standards, and is a requirement of all international financial institutions (Vanclay & Hanna, 2019). Also important to note is that what is usually intended by participation or engagement is more than ‘consultation’, which is simply the collection of the views of people about something, such as a proposed project or activity.

This chapter discusses community engagement and public participation in different settings, untangles the unhelpful conflation with SIA, and clarifies the distinctions, synergies, and characteristics of good practice. It draws on the key international frameworks that guide public participation and SIA practice, specifically those of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), notably the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation (IAP2, 2018), and those of the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) that relate to public participation (André et al., 2006) and SIA (Vanclay, 2003; Vanclay et al., 2015). Although these are not the only frameworks that could be mentioned here or are used in practice, they are

the ones that are typically used as industry standards. The similarities and differences between public participation and SIA are highlighted, and opportunities for improvement in practice are considered. As the actual techniques are merely tools to achieve engagement goals and promises, they are not discussed in this chapter, especially because they are well described elsewhere (Creighton, 2005). The author of this chapter is a public participation practitioner, a licensed IAP2 trainer, and a registered planner. The primary purpose of this chapter is to expose SIA practitioners to the wider discourse and practice of public participation.

THE PURPOSE OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

International instruments such as the Rio Declaration (United Nations, 1992), the Aarhus Convention (UNECE, 1998, 2014), and the Escazú Agreement (United Nations, 2018) establish the legal basis for public participation in environmental decision-making and impact assessment. These instruments and the various guidance documents about participation and engagement (OECD, 2001, 2017, 2022; IFC, 2014; UNESCAP, 2018, 2019; Kvam, 2019) provide much discussion about why engagement is important. Although it is often done in perfunctory non-genuine ways (O’Faircheallaigh, 2010; Gulakov & Vanclay, 2019), ideally, participation should be a genuine desire to exchange ideas, and a real opportunity for public input to influence decisions, as evidenced by some sort of change in what is being planned. Done well, participation will assist in a project in gaining acceptance or approval from local communities, in other words, a social licence to operate (Dare et al., 2014; Jijelava & Vanclay, 2017; Vanclay & Hanna, 2019). Fundamental underlying principles for this to happen include respect for participants, and having a process that builds relationships and values two-way dialogue (Sinclair et al., 2015, 2022). Inclusiveness, representativeness, and deliberativeness are also important (Hartz-Karp & Pope, 2011). Rather than just one-off actions, good practice engagement requires ongoing iterative processes, and builds the capacity of all involved (Huang & London, 2012; Marsden & Brandon, 2015). Observing all these principles will lead to more effective sharing of information and to greater democracy in decision-making (Roberts, 1995, 2003; Hartz-Karp & Pope, 2011).

The concept and role of participation has evolved over time (Glucker et al., 2013), and currently there is much reference to ‘meaningful’ participation and engagement (Wilson et al., 2016; Kvam, 2019). Achieving meaningful participation requires providing adequate notice, ensuring access to information, assistance to enable adequate participation, ample opportunities for public comment, facilitating access to public hearings, opportunities for alternative dispute resolution, early and ongoing participation, deliberativeness, using learning-oriented approaches, and being fair and open (IFC, 2014; AccountAbility, 2015; Sinclair & Diduck, 2017; UNESCAP, 2018; Kvam, 2019; Sinclair et al., 2021). Other current considerations include: the human right to participate and ‘rights-based approaches’ (Götzmann, 2019; UNESCAP, 2019); the right of children to participate (United Nations, 1989; Collins, 2019; Collins et al., 2021; Pasaribu & Vanclay, 2021); and social inclusion, vulnerability, and diversity (De’Arman, 2020; Vanclay, 2020; Lightbody & Escobar, 2021).

In a project context, the purpose of participation/engagement is to provide opportunities for public perspectives to inform and influence the impact assessment and planned intervention under consideration. Adequate assessment of social impacts necessitates engagement with communities in order to fully understand the wide range of perceived and actual impacts, since

impacts are experienced differently by different people and change over time (Vanclay, 2002; Vanclay et al., 2015; Esteves et al., 2017).

Although participation was always part of the understanding and undertaking of SIA since its inception over 50 years ago (Interorganizational Committee, 1994), SIA practice has increasingly been moving from a technocratic to a more participatory approach, with community engagement now being a fundamental component of SIA (Vanclay, 2003; Esteves et al., 2012; Vanclay et al., 2015). This is not only because there is a democratic right to participate (Hourdequin et al., 2012), but also because of the realisation that gaining a full understanding of social impacts and developing effective mitigation and management strategies requires engaging with those people who are directly impacted by the project (Esteves et al., 2012; Vanclay et al., 2015).

THE APPROACH OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

As an international body advocating for more effective public participation practice, the IAP2 has long espoused the need to consider three foundational principles: (1) values-based engagement that is focused on what matters to people, not just based on legislative or regulatory imperatives; (2) decision-oriented participation that is purposeful and recognises that those other than a decision-maker or proponent should be able to have influence over decisions, options, and steps in the decision-making process; and (3) goal-driven participation that is focused on change or intervention and thus is clear about the level of influence the public can have in decisions throughout the process (IAP2, 2016). Since 2022, IAP2 has also advocated two more principles: being equity centred, and being relationship focused (IAP2, 2023). IAP2 suggests that these five foundational principles should underpin all participation practice. These principles also provide the basis of IAP2's three pillars: the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation (IAP2, 2018); the IAP2 Core Values (IAP2, 2017); and the IAP2 Code of Ethics (IAP2, n.d.).

In the IAP2 Spectrum (Figure 20.1), the level of community influence on decisions is depicted as a continuum of five levels of engagement, from 'inform' to 'empower'. The usefulness of the Spectrum lies in the way it articulates the influence the public might have on a decision and, for each level of engagement, the implied promise of proponents. The 'public participation goal' outlines the objectives for each level of engagement. 'Inform' focuses on the provision of information to aid understanding, but not necessarily to invite feedback. 'Consult' invites feedback on particular issues. 'Involve' and 'collaborate' are occasionally used interchangeably, although a key distinction is that 'collaborate' goes further than just involving people, and means to actively partner on a particular decision or a component of a decision. 'Collaboration' is a term increasingly used in practice, but, to be genuine, collaboration needs to include some level of partnership and sharing of decision-making. 'Empower' is clearly about a transfer of decision-making ability, at least over a component of the bigger issue. Some practitioners utilise the Spectrum to assist in the selection of particular techniques (Luyet et al., 2012). The 'promise to the public' is increasingly being used in the practice of participation. Given the consultancy contracting nature of the work of public participation practitioners and the time and cost pressures this work entails, an issue for practitioners is to

be able to remain true to the goal and promise to the public for whichever level of engagement was selected and communicated to the public.

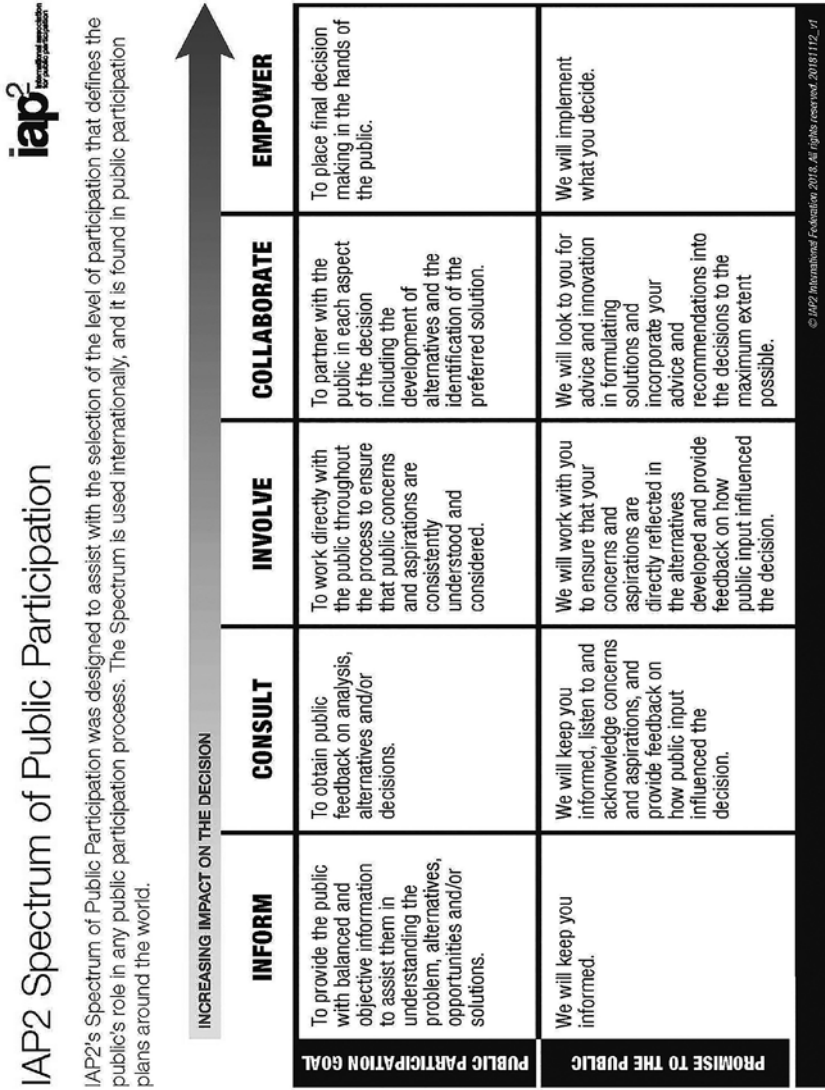
Although the notion of a continuum of participation had already existed for some decades (Arnstein, 1969; Roberts, 1995), the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation was introduced in 1999 to improve understanding and communication to the community and other stakeholders about what they could expect in any public participation process, especially in terms of the likely level of influence they could expect. Unlike Arnstein's (1969) ladder, in the IAP2 Spectrum, the levels of participation were purposefully presented in horizontal format to demonstrate that all levels, including 'inform', were potentially valid and/or appropriate when selected for the right reasons. It should not be expected that all engagement should always be at the top of the ladder (IAP2USA, 2012). Although ground-breaking for its time, there have since been many criticisms of Arnstein's ladder (Ross et al., 2002; Parsons et al., 2013; Hurlbert & Gupta, 2015).

The IAP2 Core Values (see Figure 20.2) provide a set of principles for effective participation. Participation practitioners are expected to fully believe and affirm these principles. Although arguably they are aspirational beliefs, not adhering to these principles could undermine participation practice, and lead to poor outcomes. The IAP2 Code of Ethics (see Figure 20.3) provides a further set of principles that relate to what participation practitioners should actually do. They expound expected professional conduct. To some extent, there is equivalency and overlap between IAP2's Core Values and Code of Ethics and the core values and principles for SIA of the IAIA (IAIA, n.d.; Vanclay, 2003). For participation practitioners, the IAP2 principles might be supplemented by the professional codes of conduct of any other professional body the practitioner might also be associated with. Practitioners also need to be mindful of the principles for ethical social research (Vanclay et al., 2013). Although some public participation processes might not be for a research purpose strictly speaking, nevertheless, because of the potential for harm in any process that involves people, the standard requirements for ethical social research and the protection of data arguably still apply.

The final aspect of the IAP2 approach is their five-step outline of planning a participation process (see Table 20.1). A key aspect of planning the participation process is that it is much more than simply deciding on what techniques to use. It is about detailed planning alongside a project and impact assessment process, and also about understanding who will make the ultimate decisions, what are the issues and concerns that participants bring into the exercise, and being clear on the engagement objectives and parameters that the public can influence. This helps to manage the expectations of all involved, build trust and effective relationships, and proactively reduce the risk of any loss of trust or consultation fatigue through a stated commitment to a level of influence in decision-making expressed explicitly or implicitly as a promise to the public.

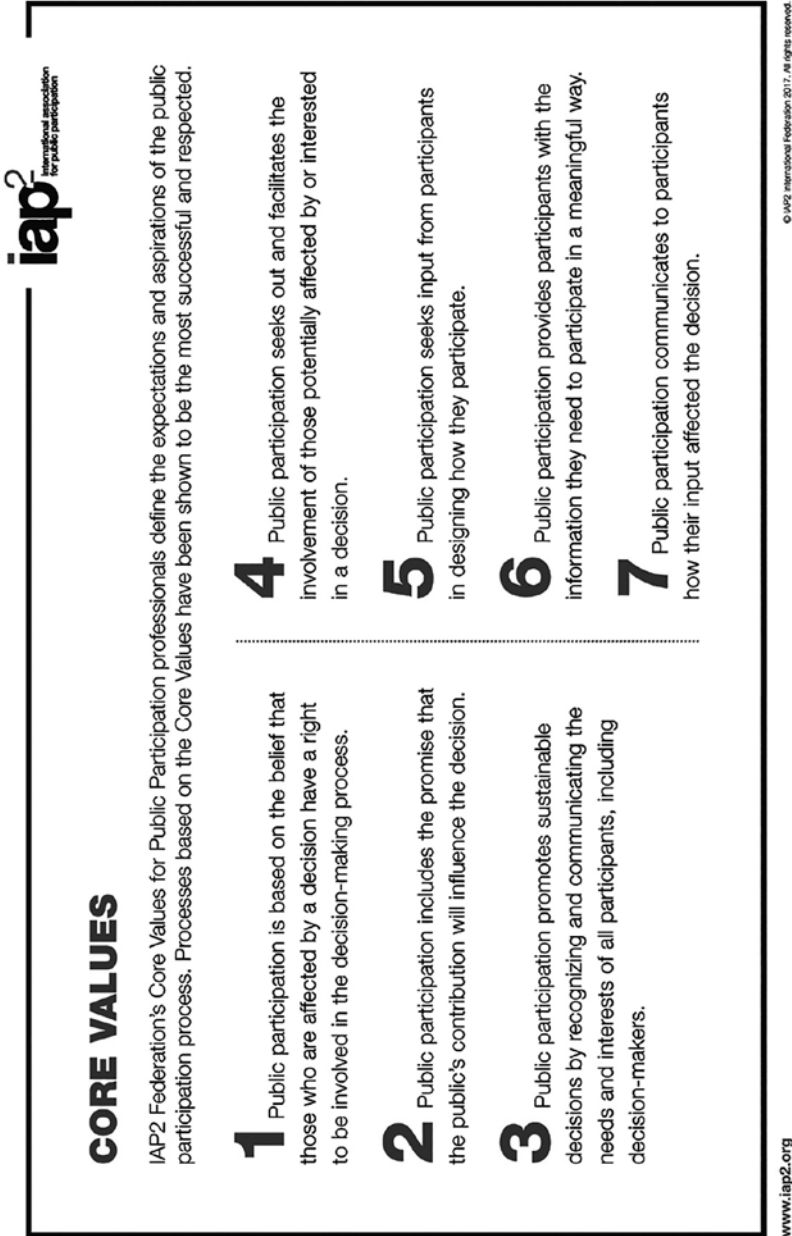
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PRACTICE SUPPORT EACH OTHER

Comparing the IAP2 approach with the SIA guidance of the IAIA (Vanclay et al., 2015) reveals much overlap between SIA and public participation (see Figure 20.4). Done well, participation can provide data to be used in an SIA. Much literature suggests that participation and SIA should be integrated, and that both SIA and public participation should be seen as a means



Source: IAP2, used with permission.

Figure 20.1 IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



Source: IAP2, used with permission.

Figure 20.2 IAP2 Core Values

CODE OF ETHICS

IAP2 Federation's Code of Ethics is a set of principles that guides us in our practice of enhancing the integrity of the public participation process. As practitioners, we hold ourselves accountable to these principles and strive to hold all participants to the same standards.

1. PURPOSE

We support public participation as a process to make better decisions that incorporate the interests and concerns of all affected stakeholders and meet the needs of the decision-making body.

2. ROLE OF PRACTITIONER

We will enhance the public's participation in the decision-making process and assist decision-makers in being responsive to the public's concerns and suggestions.

3. TRUST

We will undertake and encourage actions that build trust and credibility for the process among all the participants.

4. DEFINING THE PUBLIC'S ROLE

We will carefully consider and accurately portray the public's role in the decision-making process.

5. OPENNESS

We will encourage the disclosure of all information relevant to the public's understanding and evaluation of a decision.

6. ACCESS TO THE PROCESS

We will ensure that stakeholders have fair and equal access to the public participation process and the opportunity to influence decisions.

7. RESPECT FOR COMMUNITIES

We will avoid strategies that risk polarizing community interests or that appear to "divide and conquer."

8. ADVOCACY

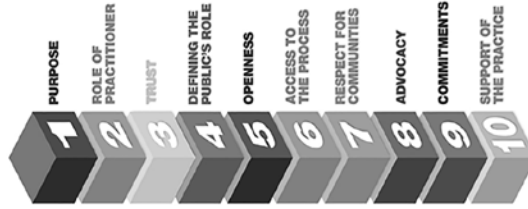
We will advocate for the public participation process and will not advocate for interest, party or project outcome.

9. COMMITMENTS

We ensure that all commitments made to the public, including those by the decision-maker, are made in good faith.

10. SUPPORT OF THE PRACTICE

We will mentor new practitioners in the field and education decision-makers and the public about the value and use of public participation.



Source: IAP2, used with permission.

Figure 20.3 IAP2 Code of Ethics

Table 20.1 IAP2's five steps in developing a public participation plan

Step	Action	Tasks
1	Gain internal commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the project decision-maker • Establish the project proponent's intentions regarding participation • Clarify the scope of the project and the participation process to be undertaken • Identify preliminary stakeholders and issues
2	Learn from the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess proponent's views of participation as per the IAP2 Spectrum • Understand how people perceive the project • Develop a comprehensive list of stakeholders • Understand the issues and concerns of each stakeholder group • Review/refine the scope of the participation process to be undertaken
3	Select the level of participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess internal and external expectations about the participation process • Establish a mutual purpose for the participation process • Select an appropriate level on the IAP2 Spectrum • Assess the comprehension of project proponent and build their awareness if necessary
4	Define the decision process and participation objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the existing decision-making and impact assessment process including any key points where certain decisions will be taken as part of the overall assessment and approvals pathway • Set participation objectives for each step in the process • Compare decision process with participation objectives • Check to confirm that objectives meet needs
5	Design the public participation plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the plan format • Integrate baseline data into plan format • Identify the public participation techniques • Identify support elements for implementation • Develop a plan for evaluation of the process

Source: Adapted from IAP2 (2016).

to an end, not an end in themselves (Burdge & Robertson, 1990; du Pisani & Sandham, 2006). However, SIA and participation perform different functions. While SIA cannot be practised effectively without engagement, public participation can and often does take place outside the remit of SIA. Nevertheless, the relationship is intermingled, interdependent, and synergistic. Figure 20.4 articulates the elements that are distinct and the areas of overlap between SIA and engagement. In a general sense, some aspects of SIA are also applicable to public participation, although the extent of social research needed for SIA means more intensive data gathering, engagement, and documentation than would be typical in a public participation process. Thus, SIA can feed into a public participation process by providing in-depth social considerations and insights into the impacts experienced by people affected by a project. Likewise, participation can feed into an SIA in terms of providing data and validation.

ENGAGEMENT NEEDS TO BE GENUINE AND MEANINGFUL

Effective SIA requires meaningful engagement, good faith dialogue (i.e. being genuine), and the ability for the community to have influence over outcomes. Issues will arise between a project and local communities when only very basic information provision and/or consultation activities are undertaken by a project or impact assessment process, when participation is



Source: The author.

Figure 20.4 Comparing public participation and social impact assessment

treated as little more than a perfunctory tick-box exercise to meet the minimum requirements of regulation, when only certain selected community comments or findings from participation activities are used, or when they are only used to support the pre-determined positions of the proponent. When SIA is done badly, or there is a mismatch between the SIA and public participation processes, this will likely cause mistrust, marginalisation of certain community groups and members, and disillusionment and cynicism about the engagement process and the proposed intervention.

Public participation can create positive feelings and outcomes, or when done badly it can lead to people feeling disempowered, shut out of key decisions, and may increase protest and other actions (Hanna et al., 2016). Participation processes also have potential to trigger adverse impacts, for example by creating or exacerbating fear and anxiety, and/or by creating expectations about certain desired outcomes (such as job opportunities) that might be unrealistic (Hartley & Wood, 2005; Vanclay, 2012). Misaligned expectations between proponents and the public, empty promises, or the erosion of trust from poor engagement practices, can be social impacts in themselves, and lead to further social impacts (Vanclay et al., 2015). In short, poor engagement can have adverse social impacts.

SIA and community engagement can be done in technocratic rather than participatory ways, with scientific and technical details being given greater weight than social constructs and insights. In contrast, the better forms of engagement are underpinned by the view that the affected people are in the best position to say how they have actually experienced past events and are likely to experience impacts from a planned intervention, as well as to suggest appropriate and acceptable mitigation measures, and to assist with monitoring and follow up, especially if they are to have any social legitimacy (O’Faircheallaigh, 2010). Nevertheless, SIA provides a way of integrating community values with science in a formalised structure,

and it enhances participatory approaches and can move EIA practice away from technocratic and top-down approaches (Stolp et al., 2002). Understanding that participation/engagement is an essential component of SIA has been recognised since the beginning of SIA (Dietz, 1987; Burdge & Robertson, 1990), and now there is strong awareness of the role of SIA in enhancing democratic participation in policy and project development processes (Roberts, 1995, 2003; Hartz-Karp & Pope, 2011).

Human rights are central to SIA and to all forms of impact assessment (Vanclay, 2003; Esteves et al., 2012), and participation is a human right in itself (Kemp & Vanclay, 2013; Götzmann et al., 2016; Esteves et al., 2017; Götzmann, 2019). Human rights are also reflected in international standards and in the general expectations around projects (Vanclay & Hanna, 2019), especially in the form of free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) (Hanna & Vanclay, 2013). FPIC demands that SIA and engagement practice are well planned and resourced, allow sufficient time for consideration by affected peoples, include a range of engagement approaches that are appropriate for the affected peoples, and do not infer ‘consult’ to be ‘consent’.

EARLY ENGAGEMENT IS ESSENTIAL

A core principle of good practice engagement is providing an early opportunity for comment on a proposed project. Participation may be required by law, especially in those jurisdictions that have signed up to international instruments such as the Aarhus Convention (UNECE, 1998) or the Escazú Agreement (United Nations, 2018), but, in any event, participation should be implemented in all project situations as acknowledgement of people’s human rights and their democratic right to participate (Hourdequin et al., 2012).

Early engagement is essential to learn about concerns as soon as possible, and potentially to adapt communications and actions in response to those concerns. This stops concerns from escalating, and potentially builds a positive relationship. It also provides important information to project designers so that they can avoid or minimise harm early on before investing too much in project definition and then having to rework the design later on when issues arise.

Barriers to effective engagement at the early stages of a project include: poor communication about the planning, legal, and impact assessment processes; lack of information about the proposed project; mistrust of the proponent, industry, and/or government entities, and of what they might do with information to be collected; a perception by local people of their limited influence on decision-making processes; and poor execution of participation techniques. Other barriers to participation include: the inadequacy of the prescribed time periods in legislative requirements (often these are too short and do not reflect the needs and timescales of affected communities); the technical complexity of project proposals; and limited resources allocated for participation (Hartley & Wood, 2005). The negative attitudes of project staff towards the community are also a significant issue (Moreira et al., 2022).

ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH PARTICIPANTS IN PARTICIPATION PROCESSES

A common issue associated with participation relates to the representativeness of participants in any process, which potentially can be skewed to certain groups of people rather than be a fair cross-section of the community. Another issue is that, depending on the technique used, the loudest voices may dominate the process and thus the feedback to the project. Careful selection of techniques used, and how participation activities are staged, can help to overcome this.

Another risk relates to the overarching approvals processes and timeframes, which may lead to restrictive, limited engagement. This may limit the ability of the practitioners to effectively deal with people's emotions, which may run high, especially where it is perceived that there will be serious negative impacts from the project on people's lives, livelihoods, values, or to their sense of place and community. People may feel and express anger and a range of other emotions (see Chapter 18). If people perceive that their views are not being taken seriously, this may lead to a sense of powerlessness. The participation process may lead to the articulation of differences in opinion within the community, or even within family groups, which may lead to conflict. To facilitate inclusivity and diversity in engagement processes, and navigate what is often an emotionally driven process, much comes down to the practitioners involved in planning, designing, and implementing the engagement work.

PERSISTENT WEAKNESSES, RECURRING ISSUES, AND VARIOUS CRITICISMS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There are many weaknesses in the practice of participation, including overarching generic issues, contextual issues, methodological issues, as well as issues relating to poor practice. Some writers argue that the benefits to be gained from participation and the rationale for it may not be clearly articulated and/or may be overstated (O'Faircheallaigh, 2010). Another issue is that some participation processes can result in uncritically assembling subjective information that may be unsupported or be based on mis-informed assumptions about causality, whereas in SIA there should be analysis of the causal relationships leading to impacts. A further issue is that some participation processes lead to the simple aggregation of insights from an 'affected community' as if it was a single homogeneous entity (Gismondi, 1997; Head, 2007; Vanclay, 2012). Affected communities, which should always be stated in the plural, are certainly not homogeneous, and the need for appropriate disaggregation of data remains a key aspect of good practice SIA (Vanclay et al., 2015).

Where there have been many participation processes happening at around the same time, 'consultation fatigue' may arise, with people not having any more time or energy to invest in participation processes. This can have serious consequences for the representativeness of any process and the quality of information received. It is also indicative of the burden that participation process can impose on communities. Fatigue is more likely to occur when people see little result from their participation. The payment of sitting fees has sometimes been suggested as a way of respecting the contribution of participation and to off-set any direct costs or opportunity costs that might be incurred by participating in a process. However, the payment of sitting fees can create other complications, and this should be considered carefully.

Another criticism of public participation processes is that there is often a lack of recognition of the subtle social and political processes that are at play in communities (Ross & McGee, 2006). For example, there can be elite capture, with certain people in a community using participation processes to enhance their own standing or financial advantage (Ogwang et al., 2019). Also, especially in situations where there is a different background between the facilitators and local communities being engaged with, there may be a lack of cultural understanding or even a lack of cultural sensitivity on the part of the facilitators. This may lead to ineffective and inappropriate engagement practices being applied. In most country contexts, participation takes place within existing power structures, and will ‘tend to reflect the distribution of social power rather than alter it’ (Devlin & Yap, 2008, p. 25). Being aware of the context within which SIA and public participation take place, and who is influential within the impact assessment process and who is external to it, is paramount for impact assessment professionals.

A recurring issue for practitioners is inadequate time being available for effective community input and comment. This may lead to restrictions on the methods for engagement that can be used, and to inadequate analysis. Even where a practitioner is skilled and highly competent, in many project settings the decision-maker or proponent stipulates the extent of public participation, and sometimes even the methods to be used (O’Faircheallaigh, 2010). Furthermore, the primary focus of project proponents being to get legal approval, as well as financial and time imperatives, often reduces their commitment to genuine engagement (Devlin & Yap, 2008).

Another issue is that public participation has become an ‘industry’ (Barry & Legacy, 2023), in which consultants play a major role. As in SIA, these consultants might proclaim independence and autonomy, but in reality are subject to consultant–proponent relationships. Furthermore, organisations like IAP2, despite having good intentions, may create ‘rigidity around what counts as public participation ... [which] gets reproduced through the power of discourse such that broad virtues of participation are affixed to an industry body that also has clear interests in solidifying its legitimacy and authority in the public participation marketplace’ (Barry & Legacy, 2023, p. 100). This process of professionalism shapes and mediates how participation practitioners understand and undertake their work.

CONCLUSION: SOME IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENT IN PRACTICE

The social impact assessment and participation discourses are separate and distinct, yet practitioners in these respective discourses often need to work together, and therefore they need to understand each other’s roles. There is potential to learn from each other, and to collaborate more, with SIA feeding into participation, and participation feeding into the SIA. For both fields of practice, there must be better training, better practice, and more professionalism. In both SIA and public participation, good practitioners need to have a strong understanding of social science, a good comprehension of the wide range of impacts that can affect communities, and be committed to ethical and professional practice (Baines et al., 2013; Vanclay et al., 2013). An open, enquiring, empathetic approach is needed. The SIA and public participation fields could do more to promote training in all competencies, and in any accreditation systems (Esteves & Moreira, 2021).

Both SIA and public participation suggest that practitioners must be ‘conflict aware’ at all stages of the process. This entails taking proactive approaches to address latent and actual conflict (Barrow, 2010). However, even where good practices are in place, there may still be

conflict, given the contested nature of projects, and the truism that conflict is inherent in projects. Being comfortable with and navigating conflict are skillsets that all SIA and engagement practitioners need to have, given that they are specialists dealing with people-oriented impacts within wider multi-disciplinary teams. A final key point is that there needs to be greater use of deliberative approaches within public participation and SIA (Hartz-Karp & Pope, 2011; Sinclair et al., 2021). When affected people are engaged in discussing issues and working together to find solutions, they are much more likely to be positively oriented to the project.

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21. Rethinking social conflict in social impact assessment

Alex Cisneros Menchaca

INTRODUCTION: SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AS A RELATIONAL PRACTICE

As an international Social Impact Assessment (SIA) practitioner in different geographies and project sectors, over the many years of my experience I have come across a surprising extent of negative and unconstructive attitudes towards local communities and individuals that are held by many actors. As concealed, subtle, or overt as they may be, these attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours ultimately frame (or at least influence) various project decisions from very early stages, especially when these attitudes are turned into actions that are experienced and perceived by local people. Interactions between the project and community (e.g. stakeholder engagement) are influenced by these preconceptions. However, the level of social harm that derives from these attitudes is not easy to establish until visible social claims (e.g. protest, resistance, reaction) arise. This chapter discusses how felt experiences, specifically those between project developers and communities but ultimately between people, can provide a different understanding of social conflicts.

Behind the many objectives of SIA lies an intention to build and improve the relationship between project developers and their host communities in all project stages (Vanclay et al., 2015). SIA has become invaluable in understanding how people relate to each other in the context of projects. Beyond SIA's traditional role in regulatory processes, I have come to understand that SIA is, at its core, a relational practice. From the early project phases throughout the whole project lifecycle, relations are continuously being reformed and reshaped, even when SIA practitioners undertake their research. Whether they like it or not, SIA practitioners are not just distant 'observers' but are a key party in the relations between projects and communities.

All parties in a relationship are integral to the development of that relationship – in constructive and/or destructive ways. Unfortunately, the importance of the relational aspects of projects only becomes obvious when they are noticeably visible, through either praise or protest. This is true whether the project seeks to attain sustained beneficial relations and a 'Social Licence to Operate', or when the dreaded moment overt project opposition arises. This chapter focuses on that dreaded moment, social conflict.

In contrast to popular conceptions, conflict does not mean violence. Conflict is part of everyday life, within and between people, groups, and institutions. There is more to dealing with conflict than just aiming to prevent or solve it, especially when done unilaterally or prescriptively. As a felt experience, the various parties involved in a conflict – and those who know about it – understand it and live through it differently. There are various ways to deal with conflict that can be applied from before a conflict begins, and certainly before a conflict escalates to becoming violent (Vanclay & Hanna, 2019). A specific conflict can be contextu-

alised through different assumptions and beliefs. If a conflict is understood, experienced, and acted upon differently by various people, any one-sided, one-size-fits-all solution to a conflict might be perceived as imposing or even violent to some participants. The presence of conflict is typically taken as a situation to be avoided by project staff, but is seldom seen as a symptom of the state of relations between people. Even when conflict is detected, it is usually unclear what the underlying cause may be and what this symptom may mean. This chapter discusses these issues.

THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL CONFLICT IN SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Scoping the Concept of Social Conflict

Here I scope what comprises ‘social conflict’ in an SIA context. This does not cover military conflicts, disaster management, or peacekeeping. However, it does overlap with conflict transformation studies, and has some commonality with environmental conflicts. This chapter does not form part of the established practice of Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment, which assesses the risks and opportunities in the work of international development agencies, including humanitarian programmes and peacebuilding interventions, often in conflict-prone regions (Peacebuilding Centre, 2013). Potentially, there is some overlap with Conflict Sensitive Business Practice (International Alert, 2005). The chapter discusses social conflict as it is lived and experienced as a consequence of project development, and as it is understood in SIA practice.

What sets social conflicts apart from environmental conflicts, which are already well-researched? Environmental conflict refers to the discontent and denouncement of the unequal distribution of environmental benefits and costs (Martínez-Alier & O’Connor, 1996), and focuses on the greater injustices that marginalised minorities and low-income persons have borne, especially regarding environmental and health risks (Bullard & Johnson, 2000; Bullard, 2018). These struggles, which are a form of social resistance to defend the environment by individuals, groups, and larger movements, are typically framed as being under the environmental justice movement. Environmental conflicts are often categorised in terms of the industry sector, the type of impact, or the type of advocacy or resistance (Drozd, 2020).

Environmental conflicts can be considered as *social* conflicts around environmental issues (Maher, 2020), and the environmental justice movement has been seen not only as the outgrowth of previous environmentalist trends, but rather as coming from civil rights movements (Martínez-Alier, 2001). What is the value (or risk) in taking a step back to reconsider the social aspects of conflict, in parallel to the advances of environmental conflict studies? The following subsections will present the distinct benefits from rethinking our approach to social conflict.

Defining Social Conflict: The Relational Approach

Conflicts arising within and outside of environmental issues are also pertinent to SIA (e.g. unmet expectations, lack of consultation) and, contrary to traditional understandings, there are conflicts that do not fall solely within economic causes and resolutions (e.g. those relating to culturally inappropriate engagement) or within legal causes and resolutions (e.g. disruptions to

place-based attachment). There is an underexplored potential in SIA to analyse social conflicts from a uniquely social perspective: an interpersonal, relational approach. This approach starts by analysing how people relate to each other prior to any technical conceptualisations of, for example, how ‘receptors’, workforce, stakeholders, economic agents and civil society interact with the project.

So what is taken as social conflict here? I argue that a social conflict is a breakdown in relations, e.g. where interactions within and between people and/or groups have been disrupted, which can reach harmful extents. This state of relational disruption can be temporary or continuous, and can develop in many ways. For instance, it can be sustained or escalated to many harmful forms of physical and mental violence (destructive conflict), de-escalated to restore basic relations (functional or latent conflict), or mended to transform its harmful potential into processes that are valued by the people involved (constructive conflict).

This understanding is in line with what was discussed above: (1) conflict is different from violence; (2) conflict is plurally perceived and experienced; and (3) conflict is understood through different assumptions, values, and attitudes. The role of attitudes in social conflict will be discussed below. Whether the escalation of conflict was intentional or not, de-escalation and the mending of conflict requires willing intentional effort and meaningful change in attitudes, behaviours, and actions on all sides.

This understanding of conflict is not centred on any particular topic (e.g. environment, rights, identities). It takes as its starting point a change in the condition of social relations and in the experiences of the people involved, regardless of the topic. This can still work with the established field of conflict transformation studies, while enhancing analysis of the degree of degradation of social relations, i.e. where relations are unable to proceed without incurring more damaging or unhealthy effects. This chapter will discuss the attitudes, beliefs, and actions that escalate conflict towards its destructive form, and the challenge against its harmful effects, including social struggles against it, or the rejection, and escape from the attempts to normalise it.

Two critical theories dealing with social conflict from a relational approach are presented to understand the level of harm caused by relational disruptions. The *recognitive* view argues that relational harm is caused by pathological relations among people due to a lack of recognition or misrecognition of the basic care, respect and esteem of people, thus causing psychological suffering and ‘moral injuries’ (e.g. a sense of injustice) (Honneth, 1995). The *decolonial* view presents relational harm as being due to the imposition of a single worldview and preference for one set of values over others, thus seeking to establish a relation of physical, mental, or knowledge-based dominance and subordination.

TRADITIONAL AND CURRENT UNDERSTANDINGS OF SOCIAL CONFLICT

The Traditional Concept of Conflict: The ‘Inevitability of Competition’

Conflict has been traditionally understood from a utilitarian viewpoint, which describes it as a form of antagonism between interests, ‘a process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party’ (Wall & Callister, 1995, p. 517). Regardless of how the interests are categorised (e.g. economic, political), the utilitarian view

narrows down the analysis of conflicts to a structurally conditioned competition over interests (Honneth, 1995). In other words, it reduces conflict analysis to a simulation based on pre-set rules, sources, and outcomes. Under this model, confrontation is expected, and any signs of resistance are assumed to be about self-preservation, a pursuit of (mainly economic) interests. In this view, social demands, claims, and grievances from people and community members in project development are easily misinterpreted. Ranging from cooperation–competition to game theories (which are mathematical forms of competition), traditional views of conflict have kept the inherent assumption that conflict has a confrontational nature that is based on the assumed incompatibility of interests. According to these theories, a conflict will be solved with a specific outcome – mostly set in confrontational, but always in utilitarian terms (e.g. resolution needs to maximise satisfaction and benefits, minimise costs and reputational damage, or maintain a ‘net gain’). While these theories have incorporated concepts such as interdependence, and have differentiated cooperative–constructive from competitive–destructive conflict resolutions (Coleman et al., 2014), they have not strayed far from the simulation of scenarios framed by adversarial and utilitarian paradigms. The common utilitarian definition of conflict is: ‘a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources’ (Coser, 1956, p. 8). While expanding on what types of interests might be pursued, this definition argues for a market-oriented understanding of conflict over scarcity, placing the attainment of desired status, power, or objects as the core motivator of people.

A traditional categorisation of the dynamics of conflict escalation is Glasl’s model of conflict outcomes (Glasl, 1982). Nine stages of escalation are grouped within three outcome scenarios: win–win; win–lose; and lose–lose. This assumes that people involved in a conflict can decide to escalate or de-escalate conflicts by choosing different strategies. A boardgame-like matrix would determine the potential outcome, as is often characterised in the prisoners’ dilemma scenario. Such a model is ‘an abstract and simplified representation of conflict’, which ‘assumes individual rational behavior in an economic sense and the short-term self-interest of both parties’ (Prenzel & Vanclay, 2014, p. 32).

Most Western, utilitarian, and liberal views of conflict characterise positive conflict resolutions as those that create win–win conditions agreeable and reasonable to all parties. However, the complexity of social relations has shown that the diversity of people’s expectations, needs, concerns, and interests make outcomes that are win–win for everyone unlikely (Vanclay, 2012). There is certainly much more than zero-sum or non-zero-sum games when it comes to the everyday experience of people! Outside the lens of relentless competition and ever-looming confrontation, different processes of conflict reconciliation, mediation, and transformation have gained traction in mainstream conflict management and resolution discussions.

The Current Understanding of Conflict and the Role of Social Impact Assessment

SIA practice has moved beyond some of the traditional conflict tropes and has come to the realisation that conflict is unavoidable, but can be managed in non-confrontational, non-utilitarian ways. Participatory processes are encouraged in SIA to provide ‘opportunities for healing and sharing, for past experiences and current feelings to be aired, for anger to be vented, and for trust-building and empathy to occur’ (Vanclay, 2012, p. 154). However, SIA still tends to focus on the divergence of interests as one of the main causes for conflict. This common view on interests has allowed conflict management and SIA to have the synergic potential to work hand-in-hand in this respect. Even though this collaboration has mostly

focused on environmental conflict management, there is ample opportunity to collaborate in terms of (socio)relational conflict transformation.

The value of SIA in conflict management has been highlighted due to the potential of SIA to identify underlying conflict early in the project lifecycle (Esteves et al., 2012; Prenzel & Vanclay, 2014). SIA can go beyond conflict prevention not just by addressing adverse social impacts before they escalate to potential conflicts, but also in the direct and indirect involvement of SIA practitioners in the formation of social relations during baseline studies, engagement and participatory practices, and project follow-up activities. SIA contributes to many stages of conflict management in addition to prevention, such as the identification, management, negotiation, resolution, and monitoring of conflicts, in particular to:

- identifying situations and behaviours that promote conflicts;
- articulating underlying conflict that may be unrecognised or yet unspoken by the people involved;
- providing an additional party (the SIA practitioner) who could be perceived as impartial to the process, yet is explicitly committed to social equity principles; and
- monitoring the changing conditions of conflicts.

These examples provide steps towards aligning SIA with the relational approach of social conflict. SIA already focuses on attitudes and behaviours that induce conflicts, and relies on their acknowledgement, which is facilitated by the involvement of the SIA practitioner at all project stages. There are two key points here. Firstly, SIA is designed to avoid negative impacts on people, and SIA practitioners are inclined to take a strong stand on issues concerning human rights issues and instances of non-egalitarian practice, meaning that the SIA principles already establish an ethical responsibility beyond meeting regulatory compliance practice (Vanclay, 2003; Kemp & Vanclay, 2013). Secondly, the methodological approach of SIA acknowledges that ‘subjective feelings and perceptions are valid impacts and indicators of impacts, partly because they lead to negative experiences and may trigger conflict’ (Prenzel & Vanclay, 2014, p. 33).

SIA practice has been learning valuable lessons that align with the relational approach to social conflict. Some of these are: recognise fear and anxiety caused by the project or policy as being an impact to avoid/manage; understand that perception is reality – the way people perceive things affects their feelings (even if caused by misperceptions) as that experience is real and harmful to them; and acknowledge that trust is a key concept – if people’s trust has been undermined by past experiences this affects the way they relate to new projects (Vanclay, 2012).

Integrating a Relational Account of Social Conflict into Social Impact Assessment

There are many relational practices within SIA that are well known (e.g. focus groups, interviews, participatory practices). However, what is less understood in projects is that these are also relation-forming activities and that they are critical from early project stages. SIA practice understands the essential role of these early relation-forming activities in preventing conflict: ‘if a conflict or crisis does arise, the absence of established relationships and channels of communication puts the project at an immediate disadvantage in trying to manage the situation’ (IFC, 2007, p. 5). In contrast, an unfortunately common practice for many project developers is to wait until it is absolutely necessary to relate with people or ‘engage with stakeholders’.

Thus, the first introduction and forming of early relations between project and community often falls on SIA practitioners. From then on, relations are shaped, enriched or degraded to different extents throughout the project lifecycle. Similarly, people's concerns and questions are managed through workplace or community grievance mechanisms. SIA attempts to deal with the complexity of conflict by designing and implementing extra-judicial mechanisms to find amicable solutions. SIA is a practice that has learned the importance of creating and implementing ad hoc processes, plans, and tools that go beyond legal requirements, especially for relation-building purposes. For example, grievance mechanisms allow complainants to retain recourse to other legal mechanisms, while providing a rights-based approach to deal with conflict.

Could relational aspects be included more straightforwardly in SIA practice, for example as project performance indicators of the state of relations? Should a separate relational tool keep track of this? Regardless of the managerial urge to identify and monitor potential conflict, one under-discussed benefit of early engagement and the implementation of a broad grievance mechanism, is that, prior to their establishment, there was no space or moment in which people involved in project development and local communities could relate to each other.

Proximity and intention matter. The very act of visiting people in the place where they live and/or feel safe and comfortable (in contrast to inviting them to a far-away place for a public meeting), and genuinely asking about their opinions, how they feel, or what they think, are meaningful relational acts. These acts provide an intentional basis to form more equitable relations. Relational acts provide a non-economic, non-judicial first step in preventing conflict escalation. Relational acts also have a mending effect that provides a slow form of relational healing. For instance, the registry of grievances and concerns, which may or may not be directly linked to the project, is in itself an act of recognition of unresolved claims and past adversities. Previously unacknowledged relational harms by historic activities of the project or industry can be better understood through grievance registry (in addition to conscious listening). This relational understanding is, in my opinion, a potential turning point in how SIA deals with social conflict. It builds on SIA's role in identifying the thresholds of conflict escalation, and grows beyond the limitations of current views to conflict resolution. We must then explore the social and therefore the relational preconditions of conflict escalation and provide SIA with new approaches to analyse and deal with social conflict differently.

UNDEREXPLORED ASPECTS OF SOCIAL CONFLICT IN SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Relations of (Mis)Recognition

The Theory of Recognition, from Axel Honneth's critical social theory, focuses on interpersonal relations and the effects of the felt experiences of recognition and misrecognition between individuals and groups. It argues that 'all social integration depends on reliable forms of mutual recognition, whose insufficiencies and deficits are always tied to feelings of misrecognition, which, in turn, can be regarded as the engine of social change' (Honneth & Fraser, 2004, p. 245). The theory argues that people's experiences of misrecognition, or lack of recognition, cause moral injuries, which motivate a social claim or resistance – otherwise understood as a moral demand for recognition (Honneth, 1995; Giles, 2020). While widely

used as a framework to diagnose and critique social injustice, the Theory of Recognition is also useful for SIA within the relational approach, as discussed below.

In the Theory of Recognition, the concept of ‘recognition’ derives from the attitudes and behaviours by which individuals and groups engage with each other and affirm themselves within socialised norms. A positive view of recognition argues that mutual relations with others (e.g. love, care, respect) is what forms a practical relation to oneself. These experiences of affirmation between persons are what establish a relation-to-self, lived through learned practices of self-care, self-respect, and self-esteem, while also forming a sense of place in society and autonomy (Honneth, 1995). To recognise and be recognised in mutual relations among peers in equitable relations that affirm characteristics one holds as valuable are vital human needs, which are essential in the formation of personhood (Ikäheimo, 2009).

One advantage of this theory is that, contrary to hyper-individualist views of human nature, recognition theorists argue that the ‘I’ is formed through the ‘We’. Therefore, self-consciousness cannot be constituted prior to some form of intersubjective relations (Bertram & Celikates, 2015). Ideally, we become ourselves through mutual and equitable relations of recognition. Examples of self-formation include: (a) relations of mutual affection and concern, which provide an understanding of people as individuals with their own specific needs; (b) relations of mutual respect of the rights and duties to each other, which provide an understanding of people as individuals with the same autonomy and responsibilities as others; and (c) relations of esteem and solidarity, which provide an understanding of people as individuals possessing capabilities and talents that are valuable for society (Honneth & Fraser, 2004; Bertram & Celikates, 2015).

What happens when recognition is not mutual, unequal, denied, or distorted? The negative view of recognition analyses forms of non-recognition (e.g. denying recognition through disengagement) and misrecognition (e.g. mutual recognition that is uneven, conditioned, patronising, abusive, discriminating), and their effects on individuals and groups. This negative view is especially relevant given that acts and attitudes are shaped by the dominant ways of recognition, which force people into social roles that objectify and standardise people (Butler, 2010; Bertram & Celikates, 2015). This misrecognition has dire effects on people. Firstly, there is an effect on how one perceives oneself through distorted views of self-worth and place in society. Such an experience shapes how one relates to others and, by relational repetition through life and dominant socialised norms, can become a normal expectation of relations. Think, for example, how social relations based on sexism, racism, elitism, classism, ageism, beautyism, etc. have normalised asymmetrical social relations and cemented unequal structures of power. Whether non-intentional or deliberate, misrecognition results in unjust treatment of people. Secondly, given that experiences are felt, people suffer psychological harms caused by a lack of recognition or misrecognition that not only hinders their development as persons, but can motivate them to fight for recognition. These fights are struggles for recognition of people’s needs, dignity, rights, their role in society, and in the decision-making processes of their society (Honneth, 1995; Ikäheimo, 2009; Giles, 2020). The distinct experiences of social suffering, such as feelings of indignation that are caused by attitudes and behaviours of disrespect are the motives behind social struggles. This is the recognitive view of social conflict.

A key concept in the recognitive view is ‘social pathologies’. Despite the name, this does not directly imply an ‘illness’ of society as if it was an organism, but it can be used to imply the stagnation or deterioration of social life (Laitinen & Särkelä, 2018). Social pathology is understood in relational terms, referring to how people relate in ways that can be pathological,

harmful, or detrimental. Reflecting on our pathological ways of social life allows us to improve how we are ourselves and how we relate to others (Laitinen & Särkelä, 2018). Self-reflexivity that focuses on how our attitudes and actions contribute to pathological relations is an essential skill for any SIA practitioner (Esteves & Moreira, 2021).

Understanding our social pathologies can help identify and diagnose deteriorated relations between people that can stagnate (otherwise dynamic) relations, undermine constructive conflict, foster adversarial expectations, and escalate towards destructive conflict. Social pathologies can occur in the formation of relations in early stakeholder engagement and throughout the project lifecycle. They are likely to result in grievances or claims. These claims can be further misrecognised, dismissed, or misinterpreted, and could result in a change in attitude of key actors towards the claimants, which can escalate the conflict. Misrecognised claims can become complex forms of protests, campaigns, movements, or actions taken by community members against projects. If the initial claims or petitions are not addressed, then more creative and/or confrontational forms of protest may be utilised (Hanna et al., 2016b). This escalation can lead to violence, especially where there is a continuous lack of recognition of and/or acceptable response, or attitude, to protester concerns.

Note that the recognitive view does not aim to avoid conflict. It understands that relations of recognition are established, contested through, and shaped by conflict (Bertram & Celikates, 2015). This understanding offers the possibility to analyse social conflict as a distinctive process. Firstly, through awareness of the relations of misrecognition or lack of recognition as the cause of the escalation of conflict. Secondly, the concept of social pathologies (i.e. deteriorated social relations) establishes the need to restore mutual, more equitable relations of positive recognition to de-escalate conflict. The recognitive view sees conflict as an analytical space, and delineates a path to: (1) identify and acknowledge relational harms; (2) restore deteriorated relations; and (3) consider ways to heal psychological injuries. It can provide SIA practitioners to identify their own role in perpetuating, preventing, reversing, and/or mending relational harms.

I believe that SIA should integrate the recognitive view of social conflict into its analytical and practical tools. Baseline interviews already accomplish much more than collecting information. They provide a safe space to ask about people's perceptions, values, unresolved grievances, and what they cherish and expect. Grievance mechanisms can also register previously misrecognised claims. Ongoing engagement, monitoring, and follow-up visits often form the basis of trust-building relations. They are intentional efforts to form and maintain good relations. To add relational goals, such as attaining relational equity and mutuality, to SIA would be rather seamless in practice, but would be innovative in shaping how these relation-building efforts could be better directed. SIA could be equipped to identify and analyse relational attitudes as preconditions of conflict escalation, and focus on the opportunities to transform conflicts at a much earlier stage. However, the recognitive view is still limited. It does not consider relations in which people are simply forgotten, made 'socially invisible', or when their claims are deemed incomprehensible (Bertram & Celikates, 2015). As much as we should be critical of harmful relational attitudes, we must also learn to *unlearn* preconceived attitudes and challenge the implicit logics behind them.

Relations of (De)Coloniality

In contrast to the recognitive view, which assumes that people will struggle to uphold their values and make claims with respect to psychological injuries caused by misrecognition, the decolonial approach understands that demands may not always be raised in typical ways (e.g. visible protests), or allowed to be raised, heard, or when raised understood as intended. Traditional views hold that conflicts, in this case contestations to a project, are due to hidden economic or political interests, or to a misunderstanding or ignorance of the proclaimed benefits of development, and can be resolved through communication and education (e.g. awareness-raising missions). In other words, when claims and demands are not perceived as adversarial, they tend to be dismissed as trivial or deceptive, or not perceived at all. The decolonial approach questions the normalisation of these assumptions and the relational inequality they sustain. It challenges the attitudes and beliefs behind the production and authority of knowledge, relations of domination and submission, and the dominant norms that regulate social relations. The decolonial approach retains a relational understanding of conflict and maintains focus on people who have been historically excluded. A conceptual distinction is due. *Colonialism*, as an historic relation between an empire and another nation, is now (mostly) over. *Coloniality*, or the pattern of power relations that derive from colonialism and shape culture, labour, knowledge production, and interpersonal relations still continues (Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Mignolo, 2011). Anti/post/decolonial studies argue that coloniality is reproduced and sustained through knowledge control, becomes ingrained in everyday life, and shapes our notion of common sense. The logic of coloniality has normalised predispositions of superiority and inferiority in how we relate with ourselves and other people (and our body, nature, and animals), and in the way we deal with conflict as a contestation of ‘normal’ hierarchy and patterns of power.

How does coloniality affect interpersonal relations? It establishes and sustains concepts of opposition to create *dominant* difference: modernity–tradition, mind–body, man–woman, human–nature (Tlostanova, 2017). An extension of this dualism is the historical classification of people into categories (gender and sexuality, racialisation, class differences). This historical classification has been sanctioned through relational repetition (sexism, racism, classism, ableism, ageism, elitism, beautyism, etc.). This repetition leads to a socialised normalisation of unequal treatment (e.g. as in patriarchy and heteronormativity). These are the consequences of modernity and coloniality, which intentionally construct an inferior ‘other’ (Lugones, 2010; Abazeri, 2022). The codification of ‘otherness’ aims to de-humanise others and create objects of abuse, domination, and exploitation (Said, 1978).

Similar to the recognitive view, the decolonial view does not aim to avoid, prevent, or solve conflict. Decoloniality helps us to unlearn what we think we know, or have come to expect of difference and conflict. The utilitarian and liberal views understand conflict as a temporary failure to find solutions, which can be overcome by goodwill, communication, and reason (Sayyid, 2014). Conflict is simply a glitch, a deviation that should be avoided, managed, or solved by returning to an established order. In contrast, decoloniality does not attempt to gain control over difference. It deals with conflict differently. Decoloniality recognises that we ‘cannot avoid conflictive coexistence and the solution is not to eliminate the difference but to decolonize the logic of coloniality that translated differences into values’ (Mignolo, 2011, p. xxvii). Decolonial views understand that the formation of the self is relational and necessarily contrastive, just like the recognitive view. In decolonial views, differences are not obstacles

to overcome, but are a condition of our selves (Sayyid, 2014). The presence of differences and difficulties in reconciliation allow an open relational space to exist in which struggles to construct new worldviews and transformations of social relations can occur. However, irreconcilable difference creates conflict and diverse struggles for recognition. The decolonial view argues that the presence of conflict keeps open the possibility of re-articulating social relations differently by escaping dominant socialised orders and refusing to be shaped by relations of subjugation or subjectification (Sayyid, 2014).

Harm is experienced through discrimination, rejection, exclusion, and erasure. These are experiences that are felt in many ways, including as existential, a dissolution of self, or as a subordination or negation of the alternative worldviews and values that form who we are and how we relate to ourselves and each other. Claims and demands against the normalisation of practices of exclusion and silencing may be, by design of relational domination, hard to see or hear, and may be easily misinterpreted. Decolonial views point to the inability of attitudes and beliefs based in modernity/coloniality to cope with difference or to relate equitably with regard to conflict, without attempting to control the outcomes of conflict or dominate over difference.

SIA has picked up on experiences of exclusion and uses relational tools to try to counter them. The requirement of free, prior, and informed consent, gender parity in participatory activities, and meaningful engagement practices, are some examples of this. SIA is embracing community-led studies, Indigenous-led assessments, and more equitable means to relate with people. Regretfully, some SIA methods and industry practices are in dire need of critical rethinking. For instance, some stakeholder mapping and analysis methodologies used in SIA still categorise people into groups based on their assumed power or influence over projects, predetermining the need, or not, to relate to them. In such mapping, some people are deemed to be worthy of being engaged, consulted, informed, or even ignored. Recently, feminist theory, intersectionality, vulnerability, and psycho-social approaches are being discussed in SIA. The decolonialisation of knowledge that would challenge traditional views of conflict, and unlearning harmful relational practices (e.g. dismissive dominating attitudes), will transform our understanding of social conflict. This can help us to value difference, acknowledge the importance of conflict as an opportunity to modify our attitudes and adjust our expectations, coexist in (re)constructive difference, and focus on conflict de-escalation. A decolonial understanding of different values can lead to less-adversarial approaches and higher affinity for diverse means of dealing with conflict.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES OF CONFLICT-ESCALATING ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS

Complementary to Moreira et al.'s (2022) list of fallacies about communities, Box 21.1 lists the attitudes, behaviours, and practices that foster antagonistic relations and escalate social conflict. It is a non-exhaustive list of attitudes and beliefs that I have experienced, seen, or heard during my professional career.

BOX 21.1 ATTITUDES, BEHAVIOURS, AND PRACTICES THAT FOSTER ANTAGONISTIC RELATIONS AND ESCALATE SOCIAL CONFLICT

Constructing the Community as a Threat

Believing in a grievance plot, e.g. an organised profession of people ‘living off’ compensation, which is heard commonly in Latin America as *‘la industria del reclamo’*, a dismissive way of referring to claimants.

Viewing opponents as ‘holding the project to ransom’, ‘hijacking’, or holding the project as ‘hostage’.

Holding Dismissive or Degrading Attitudes about the Community

Belittling groups of people as being illegitimate and as having no ‘rights’ (e.g. squatters), or dismissing them for acting outside the dominant order of things (e.g. establishing ‘quasi-unions’).

Holding a condescending view that ‘illiterate’, lowly-educated or ignorant people are involved in a disorganised struggle against the project, primarily because of a lack of understanding of the project’s benefits (*if they knew what I knew, then they would be in favour of the project*).

Singling out those community leaders who are ‘corralling’ people and turning them against projects, in the presumption that this will remove all opposition.

Discrediting Claims

Considering claims to be either ‘irrational’ or ‘unclear’.

Considering demands as being untenable, unreasonable, or unintelligible, and/or aiming to stall development or as being anti-development.

Categorising community claims in relation to rights over resources as being extortion by local communities based on opportunistic interests.

Holding Dominant or Despotic Attitudes

Seeking to ‘sensitise’ and educate communities to coexist peacefully with the project.

Seeing ‘quiet compliance’ as a virtue of well-behaved communities, and rewarding it by offering bonuses and donations for docility, as well as punishing ‘insolent’ provocations.

Threatening to ‘take the project elsewhere’ if people do not accept the conditions.

Menacing that project alternatives will be worse and more costly for everyone.

Having a Saviour Complex and/or Desiring Community Dependency on the Project

Misappropriating social conditions (e.g. levels of unemployment, interest in jobs) to bolster the justification for the project (e.g. that the project was needed and being asked for).

Claiming that the project will solve all of humanity's (or at least the local community's) problems.

Animosity towards Difference

Describing people as the 'masses' or 'hordes' of outsiders trying to 'sabotage' the project.

Exploiting pre-existing gender, racialised, class roles, or power relations by engaging secretly and separately with groups in power and perpetuating inequality.

There is harm behind and perpetuated by the attitudes and behaviours in Box 21.1. They are not only thought or voiced, but they are performed in relational practices that local people actually experience, endure, and suffer. These attitudes and how they are manifested degrade social relations to condescending or contemptuous extents, undermine the worth of people, and set up community engagement activities to fail. The consequences of disdainful and disrespectful relations, or of claims and demands being brushed off with contempt or money, are conflict and suffering. Market-based understandings and traditional conflict resolution fail to understand the complexity of this situation, and the importance of mending this psychological suffering, or of having self-reflexivity to reshape more equitable relations.

Attitudes, prejudices, and biases affect the design, development, and implementation of projects. They become manifested through management plans and stakeholder engagement practices. For instance, despite international standards about conducting comprehensive project risk analyses that include risks to community health, safety, and respect for human rights, many project security management plans are designed and implemented only to protect the project's assets, presuming that security risks are only *towards* the project. The threats that are expected are seen as unidirectional, and are presupposed to be external or foreign to the project. All these attitudes influence the early design of project components (e.g. not considering the presence of informal communities as 'valid' stakeholders, or designing a defensive security system for project infrastructure). They also – willingly or unknowingly – establish the basis of social relations for project activities (e.g. categorising stakeholders in binary agreeable/adversarial terms, based on the assumed influence or power of stakeholders). And they determine organisational responses (e.g. crisis management and security response forces) (Vanclay & Hanna, 2019). Policy structures and management systems may be designed to exclusively defend the project and organisation from risks without considering the risks or impacts to workforce or community rights.

Dismissive attitudes can also result in plans that fail to consider people. These attitudes can:

- dismiss informal communities or activities as being non-existent (e.g. only considering technical and environmental aspects as project design alternative criteria);

- normalise the implementation of non-inclusive forms of contact (e.g. using engagement tools that are behind a technological or pay wall thus assuming only tech-savvy people who can afford IT services will be the ‘normal’ stakeholders);
- restrict access to public participation (e.g. holding consultations in venues and timing that is convenient for authorities, SIA practitioners, or project representatives, but away from community stakeholders, especially those in rural settings);
- omit vulnerable groups (e.g. over-reliance on technology for remote assessments (as during COVID-19), or not ensuring diverse representation in consultation).

These dismissive attitudes predetermine relational expectations and influence the design and implementation of project plans and activities through presumed adversarial interests. These attitudes also predispose the management and resolution of social conflict to consistently result in oppositional outcomes. In other words, relations that are structured within adversarial preconceptions can only result in antagonist resolutions. This can be seen in negotiation with win/lose scenarios. While ‘win–win’ results may seem appealing, what may go unnoticed is the implicit aversion of experiencing any form of ‘defeat’. To avoid the risk of defeat, different non-compromising or non-negotiable positions towards the threat of ‘losing’ can be embedded in project performance expectations. Consequently, a dominating position in any negotiation is inherently assumed as the starting position in future relations. Thus, these attitudes distort the way projects and organisations plan to engage and relate with people during conflicts. When adaptation is required, this is unilaterally expected to come from the ‘other party’ in any conflict. When compromise is required from all parties, surplus value is expected from any concessions made by the self-assumed dominant party. When project benefits are disclosed or provided, tacit agreement and approval (i.e. social licence to operate) are anticipated as an expected exchange. When compensation is required by legal requirements, confidentiality of the settlement is preferred. Dominance is upheld.

Outside of relational positioning, these dismissive attitudes create ‘otherness’. Unfortunately, it can be common for some project proponents to be dismissive of people who oppose projects, such as by using pejorative labels, e.g. NIMBY (not in my backyard) (Vanclay, 2012). When claims are not accepted as being legitimate and/or are denigrated, this is domination over different values and misrecognition of people’s experiences. The relational breakdown escalates from there. Sometimes, the intensified reaction to more complex forms of claims, such as protests, can be disproportionate. Coverage by the media plays a large role, as it perpetuates misinterpretation of protesters and their claims (Hanna et al., 2016b), reproducing perceptions of misrecognition and coloniality. The escalation can reach violent levels with the disproportionate use of force by security forces. What goes unnoticed is that this potential violation of human rights is at the very end of the dynamic interplay of relational attitudes that justify the use of arbitrary power, for example as a last-ditch dominant ‘resolution’.

Before escalating to violence, there is opportunity for conflict to be constructive. Both decolonial and recognitive views understand the role of conflict as a means for people to assert themselves, reshaping relations that are harmful, mend experiences of suffering, acknowledge unresolved grievances, and shape common values and expectations. Conflict is a moment of escape and refusal of domination, when positive recognitive practices can take prominence. It is a moment where empathy and solidarity can overtake disdain and disrespect. Even complex conflicts can be influential in the re-articulation of social relations. Arguably, protests can have a relational and emotional impact on participants, which produces collective identity and

shared knowledge (Hanna et al., 2016a, 2016b). Conflict is also an opportunity for authorities, SIA practitioners, and project developers to rethink, and, instead of holding on to pathological dominant expectations, to release and unlearn harmful assumptions to participate in (re)constructive conflict.

CONCLUSION

Social impact assessment, when seen as a relational practice, can help change how conflict is understood. Shifting away from deeply ingrained adversarial perceptions of conflict allows us to avoid the pursuit of managing conflicts in merely utilitarian and competitive terms. The argument presented here was that conflict is not violence. Conflict is plurally perceived and experienced, and understood through different assumptions, values, and attitudes by different people. Adversarial attitudes lead to the escalation of conflict that will likely lead to violence. Unfortunately, these attitudes are deeply ingrained in traditional assumptions of conflict, and will require intentional effort to change them. An objective of this chapter is to make progress towards this goal.

Social conflict can be defined as a relational disruption; that is, a breakdown of interactions within and between people and/or groups, which can reach harmful extents. Rethinking social conflict in relational terms required contrasting the traditional utilitarian view of conflict with the underexplored recognitive and decolonial views. Both views understand that conflict is integral to the reorganisation of more equitable social relations. Blanket aversion to conflict misses the self-reflective opportunity to reorient social relations, and the intentional efforts required to de-escalate conflict, acknowledge, and mend relational harms, before restoring non-antagonistic relations.

SIA practitioners are not just studying a social context to inform decisions or manage risks as outsiders. We are people relating to other people and building relations. In recognising others, we also recognise ourselves. Building more equitable relations requires unlearning the adversarial ways in which ‘others’ are seen. SIA is not practised in a board game of competing interests, and the knowledge behind consultants, authorities, developers, and academics is not inherently better than the knowledge of local communities. We can build healthier relations by questioning our assumptions and transforming what we know and expect about conflict. Dealing with conflict requires dealing with ourselves and our pre-existing attitudes.

The opportunity to identify conflict, to diagnose pathological and dominant relational attitudes, and develop intended de-escalation applies to all stages of SIA. But, there is much more we can do than just preventing, de-escalating, and solving conflict. Rethinking conflict can lead to rethinking ourselves: the active and passive roles of our attitudes, beliefs, and actions in every project relation, the potential moral harm of conducting business as usual throughout project stages, the non-economic and non-legal alternatives of conflict de-escalation, and the major significance of intentional, constructive, egalitarian *relational* actions to deal with conflict. Think of it as (relational) mitigation measures for (psycho-)social impacts for the complete project lifecycle.

We can learn to coexist with different perspectives of what development means. Misunderstandings and disagreements represent different degrees by which conflicts can be diagnosed – as symptoms of relational pathologies or attempts to reject the relations of dominance. By acknowledging and limiting those attitudes towards ourselves and towards others

that predetermine adversarial relations, we must look beyond binary opposition, otherness, and competition, and learn to coexist with difference. Not just plural difference that needs to be ‘tolerated’ as if it was a deviation from a ‘right way’, but an equitable difference that continuously reorients how we relate to each other. The real challenge for SIA in the upcoming years is not just technical or methodological, but relational. The tools we use and the frameworks in which we work can change, but arguably the biggest challenge lies in rethinking our preconceived views of social conflict, our attitudes, and the way we relate to each other in equitable difference.

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22. The assessment and management of community health, safety and security issues in social impact assessment

Janis Shandro

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY HEALTH, SAFETY AND SECURITY

Community health, safety and security (CHSS) is a cross-cutting theme central to social impact assessment (SIA). Improvement in CHSS status is expected to be a social goal for all projects. Conversely, negative CHSS impacts, such as mortality (death), morbidity (illness) and injury, are perhaps the worst social impacts a project can create (Vanclay, 2002). While CHSS has been a recognised topic in the fields of health impact assessment (HIA) and development studies since the early 1990s (Birley & Peralta, 1992), it has been under-recognised in SIA. Nevertheless, one of the International Finance Corporation Performance Standards (IFC, 2012), which are recognised as being the global standard (Vanclay & Hanna, 2019), addresses ‘Community Health, Safety and Security’. Performance Standard 4 (PS4) outlines the proponent’s responsibility to avoid and/or minimise the risks and impacts to community health, safety and security that may arise from project-related activities, with particular attention given to vulnerable populations. This standard requires an assessment of communicable and vector-borne illnesses, non-communicable illness/disease, impacts on ecosystem services (e.g., traditional foods), traffic safety, risks associated with hazardous materials (including transport of), emergency preparedness and response, and security. SIA, HIA and other technical assessments are used to investigate these aspects.

Apart from the IFC Performance Standards, when considering CHSS issues, impact assessment practice utilises the requirements of many international organisations, including the *Equator Principles* (Equator Principles, 2020), the World Bank’s *Environmental, Health, and Safety General Guidelines* (World Bank, 2007), and the *Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights* (VPSHR, 2021). Given the COVID-19 pandemic and the emergence of several other infectious diseases, the last few years have been a landmark era for CHSS practice. Many institutions, organisations and private-sector businesses have adopted established CHSS standards (or slightly modified versions of them). CHSS is now regarded as being critical to the success of projects and to safeguard associated communities, regardless of the sector (Barron & Shandro, 2020). There is strong appreciation that: CHSS concerns often underpin the social acceptance of a project; impacts associated with CHSS have a direct and significant impact on the financial performance of projects; and CHSS issues are an underappreciated source of conflict (Phillips et al., 2014; Raiden et al., 2018; AngloAmerican, 2020).

CHSS is a broad topic with technical considerations spanning a vast array of subject areas, including (IFC, 2012; ADB, 2018):

- infrastructure design and safety;
- universal access in project design (i.e. the ability of all people regardless of age or ability to have access to facilities and services);
- hazardous materials management and safety;
- emergency preparedness and response;
- risks associated with the influx of project workers;
- impacts on ecosystem services;
- security-related issues, including perception of safety and abuse by security personnel;
- traffic safety;
- community exposures to vector-borne, water-borne, zoonotic diseases/illnesses;
- communicable diseases/illness;
- non-communicable disease and illness, including mental health and stress-mediated cardiovascular disease;
- access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH);
- gender-based violence;
- food security and nutritional disorders;
- CHSS risks associated with major interventions like resettlement or retrenchment (especially mental health and substance use).

Subject matter experts and CHSS professionals will normally be engaged to support an SIA process. However, the perceived need for CHSS support relates to how projects conceive of health, i.e. whether only in narrow biomedical terms or in its full social understanding. Often, considerable effort is needed to encourage project staff to understand health and CHSS in broad social terms. Once a full understanding of the breadth of CHSS is appreciated, it becomes evident that experts with specialised training will be needed to accurately assess, comprehend and describe the relevant pre-existing population health conditions and likely risks and impacts.

WHAT IS HEALTH?

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), health is defined as: ‘a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity’ (WHO, 1946, p. 1). The WHO *Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion* stated that: ‘To reach a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, an individual or group must be able to identify and to realize aspirations, to satisfy needs, and to change or cope with the environment. Health is, therefore, seen as a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living. Health is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities’ (WHO, 1986, p. 1). The WHO (2017, online) also stated that: ‘Many factors combine together to affect the health of individuals and communities. Whether people are healthy or not, is determined by their circumstances and environment. To a large extent, factors such as where we live, the state of our environment, genetics, our income and education level, and our relationships with friends and family all have considerable impacts on health.’

The concept of the ‘social determinants of health’ helps explain why health inequities exist and how non-medical factors contribute to health outcomes for individuals and groups of people (Marmot, 2005; WHO, 2008). Health is influenced by social, economic, political, cultural and environmental factors (determinants), as well as by individual behaviours and hereditary factors. Health also relates to historical and future aspects and experiences, as the past can influence health outcomes today. In other words, health today and experiences today will influence health outcomes in the future. When these determinants are affected by a project, this can translate into positive or negative health outcomes for those affected in the short and long term.

Recognised social determinants of health include: access to affordable health services of decent quality; personal practices and behaviour; income and social protection; food security; early childhood development; gender and gender equity in society; education; housing, basic amenities and the environment; lack of structural conflict; employment and job security; working life conditions; culture; and social inclusion and non-discrimination (Marmot, 2005; WHO, 2008; Public Health Agency of Canada, 2011).

From an Indigenous perspective, health also calls attention to the interconnectedness of mental, spiritual, physical, environmental and emotional domains. It encourages a focus on children, and requires family and community support (Reading & Wien, 2009; Kwiatkowski, 2011; First Nations Health Authority, 2016a). There are also important determinants of health that are unique to Indigenous people. The dispossession that has been experienced by Indigenous communities across the globe has led to many complex health outcomes. This has been clearly articulated in North American (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015) and Australian experiences (Commonwealth of Australia, 2013). Disconnection from land and culture has led to many complex health outcomes, including youth suicide, multi-generational violence and trauma-concurrent disorders, and stress-mediated cardiovascular disease (Shandro et al., 2011a; also see Chapter 31).

Table 22.1 provides a selection of the social determinants of health, and explains the relationship between each determinant and its associated community health outcomes. It also provides example rationale for why each topic should be included in SIA. In using such a structure in the health chapter of an SIA, EIA or in an HIA, the project team will better understand CHSS risks. Furthermore, to safeguard the long-term health of communities, some avoidance and mitigation strategies will need to focus on the social determinants of health, as some health outcomes can take years to manifest.

HOW COMMUNITY HEALTH, SAFETY AND SECURITY IMPACTS AND RISKS ARE ASSESSED

The assessment of CHSS impacts and risks occurs in SIA in two main ways. First, when health issues are integrated in the social or environmental impact assessment, usually in the form of a separate health chapter. The second way is when a stand-alone HIA is conducted, usually drawing on data and information from the SIA and other relevant assessments. HIA is well-established internationally as a standard practice (Birley & Peralta, 1992; IFC, 2009; ICMM, 2010; Birley, 2011; Harris-Roxas et al., 2012; Kemm, 2013; Ross et al., 2014; IPIECA, 2016; ADB, 2018; Fischer & Cave, 2018; Winkler et al., 2020a, 2020b). HIA assesses the health risks and impacts (positive and negative) associated with an event, project or policy

Table 22.1 *Relationship between social determinants of health and community health outcomes*

Social determinant	Relationship between social determinant and community health outcomes	Rationale for inclusion in SIA and relevance to the project
Access to health services	Adequate health service access is critical for the prevention and treatment of a wide range of health outcomes. Timely access to appropriate health services is directly linked to decreases in morbidity and mortality, and can greatly improve overall quality of life for people and communities (WHO, 2019).	The influx of project workforce, subcontractors and project-induced in-migration to the region will put greater pressure on health and social services (see Chapter 26).
Adequate housing	The adequacy of people's housing directly impacts their health and wellbeing. Those who have poor housing conditions report worse physical and mental health. Indoor conditions, such as overcrowding, the presence of mould, and whether there is open-fire solid fuel cooking or heating, increase the risk of injury, respiratory illness, eye irritation, food insecurity, infectious diseases and some mental disorders. Exposure to mould in the household has been linked with the development of severe asthma and allergies (Reading & Wien, 2009; NCCAH, 2017). Open fire solid fuel cooking is a major cause of death, respiratory infections and chronic lung disease (Gordon et al., 2014). Poor housing conditions may also increase the number of times a person seeks medical care (Palacios et al., 2021). Individuals who are homeless often encounter stigma and discrimination when accessing health services and on the street. Homelessness can decrease life expectancy, increase suicide risk, and increase the vulnerability of already-marginalised groups (Guirguis-Younger et al., 2014; Hwang et al., 2009).	The influx associated with a project can place greater pressure on the availability and cost of safe and affordable housing in the project area. Project resettlement should not return people back to poverty, but should always lead to an improvement in living conditions, especially with access to clean water and sanitations, and the abolition of indoor open fire cooking.
Income and livelihood	A good income can have a positive influence on individual health behaviours and overall quality of life, standard of living, general living conditions and psychological functioning (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2011; Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010; WHO, 2017). An individual's income level also impacts other determinants of health, such as access to health services, traditional food sources, cultural activities, secure housing and educational opportunities (Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010; Reading & Wien, 2009). However, not all aspects of increased income result in positive health outcomes. In some cases, increases in disposable income have been linked to increases in substance use and family conflict.	The project has the potential to improve access to economic resources by training and hiring community members. Livelihoods may be adversely impacted by the project.

Social determinant	Relationship between social determinant and community health outcomes	Rationale for inclusion in SIA and relevance to the project
Employment and working conditions	<p>Having secure employment is directly related to household income, which enables people to have better access to necessities related to health (Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010; WHO, 2017). Meaningful work strengthens personal identity and lends structure to everyday life. Unemployment has been linked to many adverse critical health outcomes, including increased risk of mortality, nutrition-related diseases (associated with food insecurity), poorer mental health outcomes, and increased risk of family violence and child abuse (NCCAH, 2016; Henkel, 2011; Kolahdooz et al., 2015). Unemployment is also related to high-risk health behaviours such as smoking, substance use and lack of physical activity (Berger et al., 2011). However, stressful or unsafe working conditions and non-standard hours of work (e.g. night work or rotational shift work) pose risks to physiological and psychological health, including increases in mortality and morbidity, cardiovascular diseases and negative mental health outcomes, such as increases in anxiety and depression (Burgard & Lin, 2013). Fly-in, fly-out (FIFO) working arrangements have major impacts on workers, workers' families and on host communities (Saxinger & Gartler, 2017).</p>	<p>The project can provide access to employment opportunities that can lead to greater access to economic resources. However, employment may also reduce the time people spend in their community and engage in community and cultural activities, which can impact social cohesion, cultural identity and a sense of belonging. Benefits must be measured to understand how they are being distributed across the population. Worker and community health cannot be disaggregated. Working conditions play a critical role.</p>
Education and training	<p>Education and training shape future employment opportunities and are associated with income security, which provides individuals with a greater sense of control over their own life and can result in positive physical and mental health outcomes. These determinants can increase a person's capacity to make better decisions regarding their health and the health of family members through enhanced health literacy, awareness and self-confidence (Johnston et al., 2009; Shankar et al., 2013). They also provide benefits to the larger community by enhancing skills that promote economic development, innovation, social cohesion and reduce reliance on social assistance programmes (Ives & Sinha, 2016; NCCAH, 2017).</p>	<p>Education and training opportunities provided by the project can directly support community members by enabling them to obtain the necessary skills to gain employment with the project. Training outcomes must be evaluated to determine if the initiatives result in community members gaining meaningful employment with the project.</p>
Colonisation	<p>Health outcomes related to colonial policies, practices and experiences, including residential school attendance, have been well articulated in the peer-reviewed health research. They include poorer general and self-reported health, increased risk of chronic and infectious diseases, mental distress, depression, substance use, addiction, generalised stress and suicidal ideation (Chandler & Lalonde, 1998; First Nations Health Authority, 2016b; Paradis, 2016; Wilk et al., 2017).</p>	<p>The project can be viewed as a colonial activity that operates within the regulations specified by governments. Any project that further displaces Indigenous populations from their land or proceeds without free, prior and informed consent will not only exacerbate current health inequities, but will result in additional impacts to Indigenous health and wellbeing, including to cultural identity.</p>

Social determinant	Relationship between social determinant and community health outcomes	Rationale for inclusion in SIA and relevance to the project
Health of the traditional Indigenous territory	Declining environmental health can adversely affect Indigenous populations by altering their way of life and further threatening the social, cultural, physical, mental and spiritual dimensions of Indigenous health and wellbeing, which are profoundly connected to the environment (Reading & Wien, 2009; Richmond & Ross, 2009; Auger, 2016; Shandro et al., 2017).	The effects of the project on air and water quality, vegetation, wetlands, wildlife and habitats may affect the social, cultural, physical, mental and spiritual dimensions of Indigenous health. Marine traffic may pose a serious threat, especially if an industrial accident (e.g. oil spill) occurs.
Culture	The <i>United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples</i> supports the rights of Indigenous peoples to enjoy and practise their traditional cultures, customs and languages (United Nations, 2007). The cultural determinants of health therefore include 'language, spirituality, ceremonies, traditional foods and medicines, teachings, and a sense of belonging' (First Nations Health Authority, 2016b, online).	The project may compound existing barriers that prevent the practice of culture. For example, increased traffic on marine routes, or even the perception of congestion, could reduce enjoyment and participation in traditional activities in the marine environment.
Self-governance and cohesion	Self-governance and cohesion are highly associated with improving health conditions for Indigenous people. For example, advances in self-determination (e.g. land title and self-government) have led to lower suicide rates (Chandler & Lalonde, 1998). Changes to social structure, reduced cohesion and/or community conflict (internally and externally) may lead to increased levels of individual stress, triggering negative emotions and mental health problems (Cohen et al., 2007).	An Indigenous community's ability to exercise authority over its lands and resources in ways that reflect cultural norms and values may be restricted by a project. Indigenous governance systems are diverse across the globe, and project impacts may affect community members unequally. Projects can create rifts between communities, or enhance existing tensions regarding territorial boundaries and resources.
Access to traditional territory	Access to traditional land can result in positive health behaviours including increased physical activity, consumption of traditional food, ability to connect with culture, improved self-esteem, healing from past trauma and opportunities to socialise. Reduced access to land risks the loss of personal identity and connection to culture, family stress, conflict, substance use, chronic disease, mental health stressors, shifts in dietary patterns leading to nutritional disorders and food insecurity (Tobias & Richmond, 2014; Nelson & Wilson, 2017).	The project may restrict access or result in the destruction of culturally important areas.

Social determinant	Relationship between social determinant and community health outcomes	Rationale for inclusion in SIA and relevance to the project
Food insecurity and security of access to traditional food sources	<p>Food insecurity increases the risk of developing health conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, cancer, hypertension and obesity. Food insecurity has been linked to physical inactivity (which is related to several negative health outcomes) and poorer mental health, such as acute and chronic stress, anxiety, and a low sense of community belonging (Gucciardi et al., 2009). The effects of food insecurity and hunger on children suggest that youth are at increased risk of depression, suicidal ideation and asthma. Younger children have a greater risk of experiencing cognitive, vocabulary and learning problems (Ke & Ford-Jones, 2015; Ray et al., 2019; Oliveira et al., 2020).</p> <p>Ongoing access to healthy traditional food is a critical determinant of health for Indigenous people around the world (Kuhnlein et al., 2013). Indigenous populations often heavily rely on traditional foods to meet their dietary needs and help offset the high cost of store-bought food (Kenny et al., 2018). Furthermore, in historical and present-day contexts, traditional foods are often intrinsically linked to an individual's way of life and provide opportunities for positive outcomes to be expressed across the multiple dimensions of health (i.e. physical, mental, social, and cultural) (Reading & Wien, 2009; Ray et al., 2019).</p>	<p>The project may restrict access to culturally important areas of the traditional territory, reducing access to traditional food and medicine resources. Population increases will result in more users and can pose a risk of conflict over resources (increased recreational users/ fishers, hunters and poachers).</p>
Climate change	<p>Many challenges of today are anticipated to be more complex and challenging in the future because of the effects of climate change. Climate change holds significant health risks to the global population, including increased exposure to new and ancient infectious diseases, morbidity and mortality related to extreme weather events, and mental health outcomes associated with social, economic, and environmental disruptions and changes. Health services may be impacted by climate-related disasters.</p>	<p>Climate change risks and impacts are serious and significant in nature. There is a global call for all of society, including private-sector projects, to ensure positive contributions to climate health and resilience initiatives. This includes green design and having a climate-supportive culture in projects. Long term social investment projects should take climate change considerations into account.</p>

Social determinant	Relationship between social determinant and community health outcomes	Rationale for inclusion in SIA and relevance to the project
Emergency preparedness and response	A lack of emergency preparedness and response can lead to exposure-related death, injury and illness. It can prompt post-traumatic stress disorders amongst community members and first responders. Disasters can have devastating effects on the land and waterways that can also impact communities for generations.	Projects can increase the risk of industrial accidents and events that require action from the community emergency service organisations. Community and regional capacity should be assessed and may need to be enhanced by the project.
Health behaviours and outcomes	Health behaviours are actions taken by individuals that affect health or mortality. They can influence individual health and the health of others. There are many actions that are classified as health behaviours, including smoking, substance use, sleep, unsafe sexual activity, and personal hygiene (Shandro et al., 2011b). Measurable shifts in health behaviours and outcomes can act as 'red flags'. Health behaviours are 'leading indicators' because they can be changed to influence associated health outcomes. Health outcomes are 'lagging indicators' because they measure retrospective data that cannot be changed (i.e. the death or case has already occurred). Nevertheless, the measurement of health outcomes helps evaluate the efficacy of public health activities, inform the distribution of community resources, and provide critical information that supports monitoring and adaptive management systems.	The health of the project workforce and local communities cannot be desegregated. Individual health behaviours can have major public health ramifications. Health behaviours taken by the project workforce can directly influence important public health issues, for example via the spread of infectious diseases (e.g. STIs), increasing the local crime rate, increasing the demand for illicit drugs (and overdose), and increasing demand for sex trade services.

Source: The author drawing on a range of publications.

in a systematic and reproducible manner. HIA uses qualitative, quantitative and participatory methods, and adapts to the specifics of the context (WHO, 2018). Context is very important when considering CHSS risks, conditions or issues. The nature of CHSS risks relates to, not only the context and complexity of the project, but also to the nature and intricacy of the social, cultural and political setting of the community in which the project will operate. Understanding the context of the project and the community is essential, as no two projects or communities are the same (Barron et al., 2020). HIA aims to ensure that health promotion, risk prevention, mitigation and management strategies are prioritised and that health opportunities are maximised (PAHO, 2013; IFC, 2009). International standards for HIA incorporate culturally appropriate environmental and social determinants of health and provide guidance on the monitoring and management of health risks and impacts.

Like SIA, HIA represents a form of research involving human subjects. HIAs require practitioners to undertake primary and secondary data collection and analysis to complete an assessment and to develop effective mitigation and management strategies. The assessment of health risks presents challenges, since 'health' is often regarded as a sensitive topic. A level of trust is required between the practitioner and community to gain access to data and relevant information. Ethical considerations are needed when conducting assessments that include the collection and review of health data (Vanclay et al., 2013). Typically, health data (qualitative or quantitative) contain sensitive information and practitioners must ensure that rigorous procedures for the protection of data are followed. Robust international guidance is available to support the assessment of CHSS risks and impacts (IFC, 2009; ICMM, 2010; IPIECA, 2016; ADB, 2018).

EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY HEALTH, SAFETY AND SECURITY MANAGEMENT

The management of health risks in any community requires a systematic and collaborative approach. Effective CHSS management requires acknowledgement and acceptance that *everyone has to play a role in health protection and health promotion*. As in social impact mitigation, CHSS strategies apply the mitigation hierarchy to avoid, minimise and mitigate potential negative impacts and promote positive health opportunities. There are some essential strategies that projects must take to address CHSS risks, especially when operating in a context that is dynamic and complex.

1. **Manage the CHSS behaviours of the project workforce:** Many CHSS risks are related to the workforce, especially when the workforce is temporary or particularly large. Effective management of CHSS risks generally requires applying multiple standards and linking between standards and requirements to safeguard workers (such as IFC Performance Standard 2, Labour and Working Conditions) (IFC, 2012). Topics associated with occupational exposure and safety have been well developed, yet the management of other health risks for workers, including mental health, infectious disease management and non-communicable diseases, often relies on community health resources, services and contexts. Although CHSS is addressed in IFC PS4, there is a greater need to recognise the direct linkage between workers and CHSS. This is critical to fully understand how CHSS issues impact projects, and how projects affect the health of workers and communities. In ensuring that CHSS and occupational health and safety topics are integrated, the linkages between workers and community health would be better supported. Engagement with relevant authorities and other stakeholders about mitigating exposure to disease is essential to safeguard workers and community members. The coupling of worker and community health and safety allows health and safety practitioners to broaden ideas and concepts of health risk, in and outside the project fence.
2. **Implement effective monitoring of health conditions:** This is normally done through establishing a CHSS surveillance and response programme that aims to safeguard communities by ensuring that the project is accountable for risks, impacts and management measures throughout the project cycle. Surveillance and response programmes are a critical feature of CHSS management, and are data driven. Qualitative and quantitative data used for effectively monitoring community health will be multifaceted, and will come from the many sources that describe current health conditions and health trends over time. The data collection process associated with CHSS surveillance and response programmes must be continuous, dynamic and iterative to ensure that the programme responds to changing health, social and economic factors. A clear process for collecting, tracking and assessing data related to community health should be implemented. In addition, data collected through the CHSS surveillance and response programme must measure and determine the effectiveness of mitigation measures identified in the SIA process. CHSS surveillance data can inform further investigations, for instance to identify root causes of emerging health issues. The surveillance data and process will continuously feed into ongoing risk assessments to trigger new responses to emerging health conditions and health risks. A CHSS surveillance and response monitoring programme will mirror occupational health and safety performance and include leading and lagging data sets.

- 3. Implement a process for continuous improvement (i.e. Plan, Do, Check, Act):** The utilisation of adaptive management techniques and application of the Plan, Do, Check, Act aspects of project development is critical for CHSS management as the CHSS status of community members and workers are always changing over the course of a project. It is essential that CHSS topics become embedded within project risk review workshops and risk registries and regularly reviewed.

EXAMPLE MEASURES FOR PROJECT-LEVEL MITIGATION OF COMMUNITY HEALTH, SAFETY AND SECURITY ISSUES

There are many possible mitigation measures that projects could implement to reduce CHSS risks and impacts, including:

- Ensure all company staff and employees receive CHSS training and education based on the jurisdiction the project is operating within.
- Assist communities to develop and implement a wellness plan prior to education and training initiatives. This plan should build on established community health and safety management plans and risk topic areas.
- Ensure workers have onsite and offsite codes of conduct, which outline expectations in relation to the safety of community members, specifically women.
- Ensure traffic safety is prioritised and that a robust approach is taken to protect community members from traffic-related injury.
- Ensure that an emergency preparedness and response system has been developed that has the capacity to respond to industrial and community events.
- Ensure that local health and emergency services have the capacity to provide appropriate services to local community members and industrial workers where appropriate.
- Ensure local health providers are actively promoting and implementing initiatives targeting preventive and healthy behaviours. Projects should support health promotion and health prevention activities in collaboration with local authorities.
- Establish a platform for CHSS communication.
- Establish a health liaison committee with local service leaders.
- Communicate cultural differences in seeking health care.
- Ensure effective communication and transparency during and following project assessment regarding incidents, especially if the safety of traditional food is negatively impacted and/or if the incident resulted in environmental contamination.

CONCLUSION

Community health, safety and security issues are of utmost importance to projects. Severe CHSS impacts including death, long-term illness and injury represent the worst kind of social impacts a project can have. While the COVID-19 global pandemic elevated the importance of communicable disease management for project schedules, budgets and personnel, many CHSS risks are still often not adequately identified, or are under-reported, and subsequently left unmanaged by projects. The practice of CHSS is technical in nature. CHSS practitioners

require specialised and advanced training and a solid understanding of the nature of a development project across phases and the context in which the project will be developed and operated. Robust international CHSS guidance is available and incorporation of CHSS topics into SIA practice is now a standard requirement. The ultimate objective of addressing CHSS risks goes beyond zero harm, and targets health equity, improvement in health outcomes and safeguarding those most vulnerable in society.

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23. Social impacts of land acquisition, resettlement and restrictions on land use

Eddie Smyth and Frank Vanclay

INTRODUCTION

The acquisition of land for projects and accompanying physical resettlement of people are perhaps the most serious and contested actions of projects, creating significant social impacts on affected people (Vanclay, 2017; Kabra, 2018). Many of the social impacts created by land acquisition and resettlement are under-considered by projects and by social impact assessment (SIA), most notably restrictions created by the project to local people's ongoing access to their natural and cultural resources, as well as impacts on local businesses and people's employment opportunities (Smyth et al., 2015). Although a range of terms is used, including 'project-induced displacement and resettlement' (Vanclay, 2017), in order to emphasise the extent of impacts created by these restrictions, the overarching term to be used in this chapter is 'land acquisition, restrictions and resettlement' (LARR). This chapter seeks to increase understanding amongst SIA practitioners about the complex issues and social impacts created by LARR.

The impoverishment of people affected by LARR has been much documented (Cernea, 1997; Downing, 2002; Scudder, 2011; Ogwang & Vanclay, 2021). A World Bank review of over a thousand projects between 1990 and 2010, which collectively affected hundreds of thousands of people, found that only one-third of people resettled had their income adequately restored (Cernea & Maldonado, 2018). The Compliance Advisor Ombudsman of the International Finance Corporation (IFC CAO, 2015) reported that about half of the complaints received were about land, particularly land acquisition, compensation, and resettlement issues. Clearly, there is much recognition that LARR is problematic (Smyth et al., 2015).

It is also evident that current environmental and social impact assessment (ESIA) processes do not adequately deal with the complex array of LARR issues and their significant human rights implications (van der Ploeg & Vanclay, 2017, 2018; Ogwang & Vanclay, 2021). While various standards (e.g. IFC, 2012; World Bank, 2017; EBRD, 2019; IDB, 2020), guidance documents (IFC, 2002; EBRD, 2016), and other resource materials (ICMM, 2015; Reddy et al., 2015) are available, the LARR process is still largely seen by developers as being just one of many components of the overall project, and not fundamentally different, demonstrating that there is inadequate awareness of what LARR actually entails.

Although an objective of the environmental and social standards of most development banks is, in the wording of the World Bank (2017, p. 54), 'to conceive and execute resettlement activities as sustainable development programmes, providing sufficient investment resources to enable displaced persons to benefit directly from the project', this 'resettlement-with-development' objective is rarely achieved. Furthermore, resettlement in general and many large projects that have resettled people have attracted much international criticism (Owen & Kemp, 2015; Cernea & Maldonado, 2018; Rogers & Wilmsen, 2020).

Levien (2018, p. 1) argued that ‘whether for industry, urbanization, agricultural plantations, or extractive industries, land dispossession is now an unprecedentedly explosive political issue.’ As people affected by LARR often lack voice and political agency, developers and governments are rarely pushed to go beyond the minimum compensation required under national legal frameworks. Furthermore, the main development banks tend to be primarily concerned about mitigation to address losses, rather than enhancing development outcomes. Although there are social practitioners inside companies, lending institutions, and governments who sometimes push for higher standards, the pressure to deliver land quickly for projects limits their ability to influence real change. A key challenge to improving LARR is the power dynamics and respective bargaining positions between and within developers and communities. Many contextual factors, such as governance issues (corruption, authoritarianism), conflict, extreme poverty, and resource depletion, are not adequately considered in the international standards or LARR guidance. This chapter advocates that, to address these issues and ensure acceptable outcomes from LARR, having an agreement-making process between the project and affected communities is essential.

There is a strange relationship between SIA and LARR. Displacement and resettlement are amongst the greatest social impacts of a project, and the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP), which outlines the LARR process, is often positioned as a sub-plan of the overall Environmental and Social Management Plan. ESIA consultants are often tasked with preparing a RAP to secure early approvals for the project. However, given that ESIA consultants seldom implement RAPs, often they are not sufficiently competent or experienced to understand LARR risks. Furthermore, they often recommend ineffective ‘alternative livelihoods’ solutions or endorse cash compensation arrangements that can result in the impoverishment of affected people. A further issue is that the information collected and timeframes for SIA generally do not align with the needs of LARR practitioners (Rowan, 2017). The key recommendations of this chapter are: SIA practitioners need a greater awareness of LARR; the social impacts created by LARR need to be more strongly emphasised in SIA reports; LARR needs to be a negotiated process with independent advice for affected people on impacts and benefits; and there needs to be greater resources for the management of LARR.

KEY CONCEPTS RELATING TO THE SOCIAL IMPACTS FROM LAND ACQUISITION

‘Place’ is a key concept in SIA. A concept primarily from the field of human geography, ‘place’ refers to the meanings people ascribe to ‘space’ (i.e. territory) as well as to their homes, communities, landscapes, and favourite locations. In other words, places are spaces that are imbued with meaning (Vanclay, 2008). The importance of place is represented in notions like ‘sense of place’ and ‘place attachment’ (Vanclay, 2012, 2020). When conceived as ‘the local environment’, place is fundamentally important to the survival of Indigenous peoples and is a key reason why ‘Free, Prior and Informed Consent’ (FPIC) applies to all projects affecting Indigenous peoples (Hanna & Vanclay, 2013). Projects change the local environment, disrupting people’s sense of place, and potentially interfering with people’s livelihood activities and ability to continue to live there. When people are pushed out of the way and/or resettled to make way for a project, the social impacts experienced are especially severe. This experience

of being ‘displaced’ results in people losing their sense of place and is very unsettling for people (Vanclay, 2017).

‘Displacement’ is a key term in the fields of migration and population studies, LARR, development studies, human geography, and it has varying meanings in physics, mathematics (geometry), and psychology. It is much used by the World Bank and other international financial institutions. From English grammar, the suffix ‘-ment’ indicates that ‘displacement’ is the action or process of being displaced. The most general meaning of displacement is something like a change in position of an object (or fluid) due to some external force or process. In migration and population studies, displacement usually means the forced or involuntary movement of people away from their home or place of living, for example, as a refugee or internally displaced person fleeing war or disaster. In human geography and development studies, displacement refers to the external forces and social change processes (Vanclay, 2002) that push people out of their homes. For example, project-induced in-migration (see Chapter 26), the gentrification of neighbourhoods, and touristification can lead to poorer people being displaced, i.e. pushed out of their homes and communities. In the LARR field, displacement generally refers to the potential of being rendered homeless by a project and, therefore, that an active process of resettling people is an essential part of the project. Thus, in the context of LARR, ‘resettlement’ can be regarded as ‘the planned process of relocating people and communities from one location to another as part of the project-induced land acquisition necessary to allow a project to proceed’ (Vanclay et al., 2015, p. 92).

Some critical scholars have argued that ‘displacement’ is too neutral a term as it implies a subtle process whereas what actually happens to people is a deliberate violent act of eviction and dispossession (Owen & Kemp, 2015; Cernea & Maldonado, 2018; Levien, 2018; Ijabadeniyi & Vanclay, 2020; Rogers & Wilmsen, 2020; Baker, 2021; Mohanty, 2022). Levien (2018) argued that the term ‘displacement’ lacks the active and relational sense of dispossession and makes it appear as if it just happens.

There is a complication created by the international financial institutions, which generally differentiate between ‘physical displacement’ and ‘economic displacement’. Although discussion about this occurred in the 1990s, the IFC (2002) *Handbook for Preparing a Resettlement Action Plan* is likely to be the original authoritative source of this distinction, with physical displacement defined as the ‘Loss of shelter and assets resulting from the acquisition of land associated with a project that requires the affected person(s) to move to another location’, and economic displacement defined as the ‘Loss of income streams or means of livelihood resulting from land acquisition or obstructed access to resources (land, water, or forest) resulting from the construction or operation of a project or its associated facilities’ (IFC, 2002, p. ix). Many projects, especially those with flexibility in siting (such as pipelines, roads, windfarms), can have major economic displacement impacts but minimal physical displacement. The need for resettlement practitioners and project social performance staff to address economic displacement and related livelihood issues means that awareness of issues relating to land acquisition must be expanded beyond physical resettlement (Esteves, 2021).

Use of the term ‘resettlement’ in the international standards to cover all LARR impacts causes confusion in practice because, in most common understandings, ‘resettlement’ tends to only mean moving people out of their homes, and not all the other impacts of land acquisition. This results in a downplaying of these impacts, especially where no houses are impacted. The word ‘resettlement’ can also be confusing because it is often applied to finding long-term arrangements for refugees currently in temporary accommodation. To avoid overlap with

refugee resettlement, expressions like ‘development-induced displacement and resettlement’ (DIDR) or ‘project-induced displacement and resettlement’ (PIDR) are often used (Vanclay, 2017). However, this chapter seeks to emphasise the potential of projects to impose restrictions on local people’s ongoing access to natural and cultural resources, as well as impacts on local businesses and people’s employment opportunities, therefore the expression ‘land acquisition, restrictions and resettlement’ (LARR) is used.

All projects require land for various purposes and thus inevitably displace people, including projects whose primary purpose might be improvement of local people’s wellbeing. Furthermore, the ‘associated facilities’ that accompany projects (e.g. access routes, worker accommodation camps, electricity supply infrastructure, processing facilities, etc.) also require land. Sometimes, land for projects is acquired in the open market, whether by buying what is already for sale, or by enticing land owners with a lucrative offer, both of which are termed ‘willing buyer, willing seller’ transactions or voluntary LARR. However, voluntary LARR transactions can expose affected people to considerable risks unless they are provided with independent advice, and it is always recommended that the international standards are applied to all LARR whether voluntary or involuntary. Public sector projects, however, tend to rely on their ability to ‘expropriate’, meaning the act of using the power of the state (i.e. eminent domain) to seize the land (and/or possessions) of people. From the perspective of international jurisprudence, such an act is only legally legitimate when the project is truly in the public interest, there is due process, and adequate compensation is provided (Vanclay, 2017). The expropriation of land (i.e. houses and non-movable assets) is very stressful for local people, and all advice suggests avoiding expropriation if at all possible. Some form of negotiated agreement would likely lead to better outcomes for the community and the project.

From a human rights and legal perspective, in any act of land acquisition, arguably including willing buyer, willing seller transactions, the project must ensure ongoing security of housing, and that people’s livelihoods are not negatively affected. This generally means that there must be a process to ensure replacement housing, the prompt payment of compensation for lost assets, and due process, including access to legal advice (van der Ploeg & Vanclay, 2018). If communities are resettled, arrangements must be negotiated to ensure that people have ongoing access to essential public services (van der Ploeg et al., 2017). In general, the international standards go further than the minimum legal requirements in most countries, but most commentators consider that the standards do not go far enough in recognising and addressing the full range of social impacts experienced from LARR (Vanclay, 2017).

One under-considered aspect of LARR is restrictions on access to and use of resources. This can occur when projects erect barriers or impose restrictions on the use of natural or cultural resources, or limit business and employment activities. A typical example is with highway or railway line construction, where the non-crossable linear project creates pockets of land that can be impossible or impractical to access. ‘Orphan land’ refers to the small parcels of land that become unusable, mostly because of restricted access, or because they are so small and economically unviable. Many projects create orphan land. Good practice demands that land owners be compensated for any orphan land created. Furthermore, many aspects of projects create major inconveniences that change the economic value of land and/or affected businesses. Highways or railways (or blocks of land with wide frontages that prohibit entry) can increase the distance to access a site, sometimes by 10 km or more. Such a situation is not only an inconvenience, but represents a real cost to the land owner. If it was a business, such a distance would likely be unpalatable to customers. Barriers can also increase the distance

for communities to access essential facilities such as water, schools, or health centres. Much more attention must be paid to how projects impact on access to natural and cultural resources, social infrastructure, businesses, and employment.

A final comment to make on terminology is that the people being resettled should be called ‘resettlees’. Unfortunately, for various reasons, much of the older literature has popularised the expression ‘resettlers’. However, English grammar is clear in the meaning of suffixes. Just like employer–employee, interviewer–interviewee, and trainer–trainee, the ‘-er’ suffix is the person who is doing, while the ‘-ee’ suffix is the person to whom it is done. Any person moved against their will has to be a ‘resettlee’ (even if Microsoft Word does not think it is a word!). Furthermore, the LARR field tends to use the acronym PAPs to refer to project-affected people. In our view, use of this acronym is dehumanising and derogatory, and normalises bad practices (Ijabadeniyi & Vanclay, 2020). We urge all socially conscious practitioners to never use this term.

CURRENT STANDARDS AND GOOD PRACTICE THAT APPLY TO LARR

Projects need to comply with national legislation and conform to the expectations embedded in international standards, otherwise they attract stakeholder attention. This is especially true for resettlement actions. As land and housing are highly significant to people, and are human rights issues, they are key matters addressed in international standards and national legislation. International financial institutions have a major role in setting international standards. Any project that borrows money has to meet the requirements of the lender. However, even where a commercial project does not need external financing, it is likely that their stakeholders and business partners will expect compliance with international standards (Vanclay & Hanna, 2019).

Although each major bank has its own specific procedures, there is reasonable consistency in the requirements and expectations across the international financial institutions. Although somewhat dated now, the IFC (2012) Performance Standards have been considered to be the ‘gold standard’ for private sector environmental and social management, with its Performance Standard 5 (PS5) being about ‘Land Acquisition and Involuntary Resettlement’. The objectives of PS5 are (IFC, 2012, p. 32):

- To avoid, and when avoidance is not possible, minimise displacement by exploring alternative project designs.
- To avoid forced eviction.
- To anticipate and avoid, or where avoidance is not possible, minimise adverse social and economic impacts from land acquisition or restrictions on land use by (i) providing compensation for loss of assets at replacement cost and (ii) ensuring that resettlement activities are implemented with appropriate disclosure of information, consultation, and the informed participation of those affected.
- To improve, or restore, the livelihoods and standards of living of displaced persons.
- To improve living conditions among physically displaced persons through the provision of adequate housing with security of tenure at resettlement sites.

The objectives of the LARR standards of the other banks are generally similar to those of PS5. Apart from the guidance documents of various international financial institutions, other

guidance on LARR is provided by the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security* (VGGT for short), which were first published by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization in 2012 and revised in 2022 (FAO, 2022). The VGGT outlines the principles, standards, and responsible practices for the appropriate governance of land. However, in being pitched to a different target audience, the VGGT are framed quite differently to the standards of the international financial institutions, and thus reflect a different approach and purpose (Cotula, 2019).

By synthesising the various standards, a list of what is generally regarded as being good practice in relation to LARR can be established:

- There must be a process to consider all social and environmental issues, and to develop mitigation and management systems to address these issues.
- The mitigation hierarchy (avoid, minimise, mitigate, restore, compensate, or offset) should be used.
- The resettlement process must be done in a way that is consistent with the rule of law, with an adequate timeframe to enable due process, proper consideration of all the issues, and time to prepare by the people to be resettled.
- There must be a process to identify all stakeholders, with separate consideration of the concerns and interests of each stakeholder group.
- There should be an effective stakeholder engagement process.
- An effective grievance redress mechanism should be implemented.
- Gender awareness must be displayed throughout the process, including gender disaggregation of data, and awareness of how women and men are separately affected by the project and by resettlement.
- Vulnerable individuals and groups must be identified and appropriate mechanisms are implemented to ensure that they are not disadvantaged.
- The project should demonstrate commitment to continuous improvement.
- Reasonable attempts should be made to enhance benefits to local communities, and ideally that there be some form of benefit-sharing.
- There should be an analysis of alternatives, including in relation to possible resettlement sites.
- Resettlement must be avoided wherever possible.
- Forced eviction (as defined by United Nations, 2014) is forbidden.
- Expropriation is only to be used as a last resort; some form of negotiated agreement is preferable.
- Where land title has been surrendered, legal title must be provided for any housing plot and replacement land.
- Where people without legal title are being resettled, they must be provided with adequate housing and security of tenure.
- People being resettled should be given improved housing.
- Interim temporary housing arrangements are strongly discouraged.
- Mitigation measures must be implemented and compensation should be paid before any impacts are experienced.
- Associated facilities must be considered, with associated facilities being defined as ‘facilities that are not funded as part of the project and that would not have been constructed or

expanded if the project did not exist and without which the project would not be viable' (IFC, 2012, p. 8).

- There must be capacity in the organisation and governance structures to manage the resettlement.
- Tangible and intangible cultural heritage should be identified and protected.
- Affected livelihoods must be restored or improved.
- There must be consideration of how essential public services will be provided at resettlement sites.
- There needs to be a process to improve social cohesion.
- Living conditions and the living environment of resettled and host communities are to be improved, including infrastructure and services.
- People should be thoroughly consulted on all relevant aspects of the resettlement. Ideally, they have had the ability to choose from a range of options.
- Common property resources must be restored and/or appropriately compensated, and consideration must be given to facilitate ongoing access to natural and cultural resources.
- People who occupy land prior to the cut-off date but don't have any recognisable legal right or claim to the land or assets are entitled to compensation at replacement cost and support for resettlement and livelihood restoration.

A complex aspect of LARR is how compensation is provided. Often, national legislation requires compensation for land, houses, and assets to be paid in cash (usually into a bank account), although the development banks typically suggest that compensation should be in-kind. There are numerous issues with cash compensation, including who the payment is made to (often only to male heads of households), and how the payment is made (as cash-in-hand or as a transfer to a bank account). Cash compensation is fraught with complexities, including the potential for corruption, the risk of theft, the money being spent unwisely, and women and children being disproportionately impacted by poor investment decisions of men. The injection of large amounts of cash into a community can lead to inflation, making the compensation less valuable. Payment in cash can lead to impoverishment because it is rarely spent on ongoing sustainable livelihoods. Cash compensation for land cannot be seen as a substitute for developing programmes to meet the objective of improving the livelihoods affected by LARR.

Although the LARR process is described below, it is beyond the scope of this chapter to explain in detail how LARR is done in projects (for this, see IFC, 2002, 2023; Reddy et al., 2015; EBRD, 2016; Smyth & Vanclay, 2018). Nevertheless, two overarching points of understanding for SIA professionals are that: LARR is a process and not just a set of plans; and that there needs to be a dialogue with the affected people to achieve good faith agreements that comply with international standards. This is explained further below.

There are three key components (documents) in the LARR process that are part of the general understanding needed by SIA professionals. First, the international financial institutions generally expect that a 'Resettlement Policy Framework' (RPF) (or sometimes just 'Resettlement Framework') be developed, especially for large projects. This is an overarching statement articulating the principles, procedures, expectations, and organisational arrangements, especially around compensation and mitigation that will apply to the LARR process associated with a particular project. It is a governance document, usually negotiated between

the lender and the project, with the intention that it would be binding on any party who might be engaged to assist in the LARR process.

Second, the main document in LARR is called the ‘Resettlement Action Plan’ (RAP). The RAP is a working document that develops over time, and serves different stakeholders, including the financial institution, the government’s oversight body, the consultant, the project, and the affected community. Ideally, the RAP should be a negotiated agreement with the affected community. In general terms, the RAP is a detailed plan about how a specific resettlement process will be implemented in all practical aspects. The RAP includes: the legal framework and standards to be applied; a socioeconomic baseline and community profile; reports of consultations with affected people; and it outlines the strategies for: (i) avoiding and minimising resettlement; (ii) compensation for losses; (iii) providing replacement housing; (iv) physically moving people; and (v) ensuring that affected people have opportunities to improve their incomes, income-producing activities, standard of living, and patterns of consumption.

The third key document is the Livelihood Restoration Plan (LRP), or, in order to emphasise the principle of improvement in living conditions, sometimes called the Livelihood *Improvement* Plan. Some lenders do not require a RAP if there is no physical displacement, but will require an LRP to address any economic displacement. However, an LRP will be needed in addition to a RAP (or as part of the RAP) for all projects that have physical displacement.

A Livelihood Restoration Plan should identify the full range of impacts to livelihoods as a result of project land acquisition or restrictions to land use, identify affected persons and provide a detailed plan for compensation and livelihood restoration. The Plan should, at a minimum, provide the following information: (i) an introduction to the project; (ii) summary of project impacts; (iii) summary of the social baseline; (iv) regulatory framework; (v) results of stakeholder engagement; (vi) eligibility criteria; (vii) entitlement matrix; (viii) timeframe for implementation; (ix) organisational capacity; (x) monitoring, evaluation, and reporting; and (xi) budget and resources. (IFC, 2012, PS5, GN56)

CRITIQUING CURRENT STANDARDS FOR LAND ACQUISITION AND HOW THEY ARE APPLIED

Despite the many standards governing LARR and projects generally, the actual performance of project resettlement actions is manifestly poor, and it is evident that the standards are lacking in how they are applied, what they include, and in commitment by most stakeholders to the underlying principles. There is also much manipulation and distortion in application of the standards (Ijabadeniyi & Vanclay, 2020; Kahangirwe & Vanclay, 2022). The key criticisms that can be made of the international standards and their application are listed below, grouped into issues related to the substance or content of the standards, and the processes of applying the standards.

Substantive issues:

- There is ambiguity and a lack of specificity in the language used in the standard, and thus the standards are open to different interpretations, with projects usually choosing least-effort options.
- The standards state that negotiated agreements are ‘encouraged’ thereby making them optional. Arguably, negotiated agreements should be required as the default process. The requirements should also demand that there be effective dialogue between the project and affected communities.

- The IFC performance standards require that, for physically displaced persons, projects ‘improve or restore their standards of living or livelihoods’ (IFC, 2012, p. 33) and for economically displaced persons, projects ‘improve, or at least restore, their means of income-earning capacity, production levels, and standards of living’ (IFC, 2012, p.38). This is generally interpreted as a choice (to restore or improve), with projects typically opting for the lower threshold. This can result in people being resettled back into poverty, rather than the project using resettlement as an opportunity to move them out of poverty. The standards should unambiguously require improvement in livelihoods in line with the mission of the development banks to eliminate extreme poverty and the Sustainable Development Goal 1 (to end of poverty in all forms).
- The standards do not strongly condemn expropriation, nor do they specify when land acquisition could appropriately be considered as being in the ‘public interest’. There is little mention of restricting the inappropriate use of expropriation. The standards should restrict use of expropriation to very limited circumstances, and require negotiated agreements for all other LARR and an up-front negotiations process for any limited expropriation.
- The standards do not specifically require benefit-sharing (or at least attempts to ensure the enhancement of benefits). Benefit-sharing mechanisms should be a normal requirement of all projects.
- The standards (as applied in practice) fail to adequately consider LARR impacts equally on men and women or ensure that they receive an equal share of project benefits.

Process issues:

- There is weak enforcement of the standards and limited compliance mechanisms in how the standards are applied.
- There is no specification in the standards as to the competence of the consultants who provide LARR consulting services. Too many resettlement actions are done by individuals and companies that are not adequately qualified.
- Given that consultants are paid by a developer seeking to acquire land quickly and cheaply, consultants working in LARR tend to be biased in ways that favour the developer.
- There is no requirement for affected people to have access to independent legal and expert advice, consequently they are often exploited, or deprived of appropriate outcomes from projects. Capacity building and independent advice are needed to ensure that affected people can fully understand the impacts likely to be experienced, and so that they can effectively negotiate in an agreement-making process.

A FRAMEWORK FOR NEGOTIATING AGREEMENTS TO IMPROVE LAND ACQUISITION AND RESETTLEMENT PROCESSES

The LARR process entails negotiating agreements with people in order to dispossess them of their land, homes, businesses, natural resources, and cultural attachments. The alternative to negotiated agreements would be expropriation and eviction, which potentially has serious human rights, conflict, and reputational risks. Several global multi-stakeholder initiatives, including the World Commission on Dams (WCD, 2000) and the Mining, Minerals, and Sustainable Development Project (IIED, 2002), have recommended that land-use decisions

be made through negotiated democratic decision-making processes that respect FPIC and the rights and interests of communities and other stakeholders. International standards require that projects negotiate FPIC with Indigenous peoples, and that projects with significant adverse impacts achieve broad community support, while negotiated agreements are encouraged in other situations (IFC, 2012). The challenge is how to engage in good-faith negotiations when LARR is led by developers who put pressure on consultants to understate impacts and overstate benefits to get the project approved and for the land to be acquired as quickly and cheaply as possible. Reddy et al. (2015) argued there was both a human rights and a business case for negotiating with affected people binding agreements on developers to ensure that projects have peaceful, undisturbed possession of land acquired, and the ongoing ability to develop and operate without disruption while promoting the positive development of affected communities.

There is considerable international experience in community agreement-making. For example, Indigenous communities in Canada have the right to FPIC and the ability to negotiate impact and benefit agreements (O’Faircheallaigh, 2013, 2018). Most countries in Africa require benefit-sharing agreements to be negotiated (Wankhede, 2020). The key to agreement-making is building trust on both sides, which requires good faith negotiations through dialogue. Trust can be built more quickly when the dialogue is facilitated in democratic multi-stakeholder forums by an independent moderator acceptable to the community and the project, and through the provision of independent experts to advise the community on the nature of impacts and benefits.

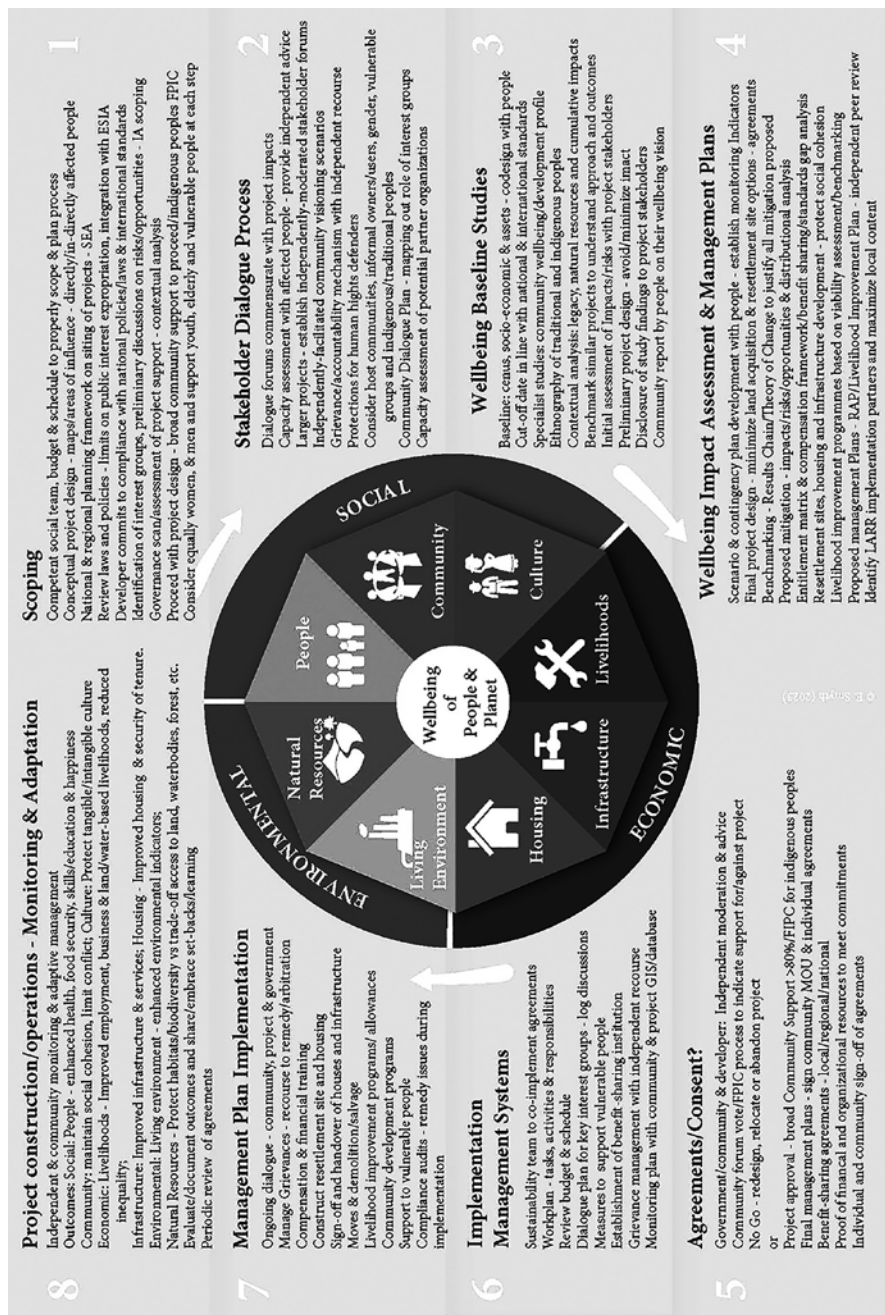
Figure 23.1 presents a framework for negotiating community agreements relating to LARR and benefit-sharing agreements for near-project communities. It was developed from good practice and the lead author’s experience in negotiating agreements and implementing LARR. The Social Framework for Projects (Smyth & Vanclay, 2017) is placed at the centre of the process to emphasise that the focus on LARR should be on ensuring the wellbeing of affected people by considering the eight key wellbeing categories.

Phase 1: Scoping and Establishment of the LARR Process

Scoping is the preliminary phase of getting started in the LARR process. It provides a preliminary indication of what is involved and an understanding of the project context and likely issues. Becoming thoroughly familiar with the project and its land acquisition needs is essential so that the number of affected households and people can be established, and so that alternatives can be considered. The failure to scope the LARR process properly is a major contributor to poor outcomes from LARR.

The scoping process should collate the following information:

- Preliminary project design option maps, including for all project infrastructure and associated facilities, with areas of influence for directly and indirectly impacted people outlined. The areas of influence should be based on the likely social and environmental impacts rather than any arbitrary distance from the site.
- An overview of national and regional planning policies and plans for the siting of projects and any Strategic Environmental Assessments that might be relevant.
- A review of laws and policies that will apply to the project and a gap analysis of national laws and international standards.



Source: The authors.

Figure 23.1 A framework for community agreements in land acquisition, restrictions and resettlement

- A statement of commitment from the developer to comply with international standards and to reach negotiated agreements with the affected people and local communities.
- An initial governance scan to determine what is really going on in the project area, and how resources such as land, housing, and access to natural resources are accessed through formal and informal processes, and how these resources are used.
- An identification of project interest groups and any summaries from preliminary discussions with them.
- A contextual analysis to identify cumulative project impacts and any legacy land acquisition and resettlement in the project area, and any history of conflict or opposition to the project.
- A review of any government-led LARR to ensure that the people affected by legacy resettlement are supported in accordance with international standards.
- Where livelihoods are dependent on natural resources, establish whether they can be improved by access to replacement natural resources. Where existing livelihoods cannot be enhanced, the design of the project must be revised to avoid LARR.
- The project should check whether there is broad community support for community representatives to engage in dialogue with the company about the impacts and benefits from the project and to inform inclusive decision-making. If community representatives do not wish to engage in dialogue, then the project should respect that decision by reconsidering or pausing the project. In such situations, as a trust-building measure, the project could provide resources to independent organizations to support the communities by assessing the impacts and benefits from the project.

During scoping, it is important not to raise expectations that could trigger speculative activities, opportunistic behaviour, or unrealistic expectations about jobs. Speculative activities and opportunistic behaviours happen at multiple levels, from improper land deals, to hastily constructing structures or planting ‘crops’ in an attempt to maximise compensation. LARR practitioners need to discourage improper actions, and will need to develop strategies to address them where they do occur (Reddy et al., 2015).

Each phase in LARR must consider the wellbeing of women, men, youth, the elderly, and vulnerable people. The project should engage qualified experts to support these groups to maximise their participation in the LARR process, minimise impacts, and ensure that they share in project benefits. Managing the LARR process properly requires use of appropriately qualified and experienced experts, including:

- A LARR expert (who is preferably also a social specialist) with proven experience in negotiating LARR agreements to guide the overall process.
- A core social team of local and international (where appropriate) anthropologists, community development experts and sociologists to interface with the community throughout the full LARR process.
- One or more qualified livelihoods experts to cover the key livelihoods impacts that may arise in the particular project (e.g. agriculture, forestry, fishing, SMEs) to coordinate specialist studies and benchmarking to assess impacts and determine whether support measures can be designed to ensure that sustainable livelihoods are developed post resettlement.
- A technical support team to manage logistics, administration, finances, GIS, database, communications materials, etc.

- Various other professionals, depending on the likely impacts, including social workers to support vulnerable people, gender experts, lawyers to advise on laws and agreements, cultural experts, surveyors and valuers, engineers, planners, architects to advise on infrastructure and housing, and environmental experts to advise on biophysical impacts and biodiversity.

There should be sufficient budget and time to properly scope, plan, and implement the LARR process. The budget and time required to undertake a LARR process will vary according to the context of each project. To give some impression, a limited LARR process involving physical resettlement should allow for at least one year to plan and negotiate agreements with affected people, one year to construct alternative housing and infrastructure, and one year to compensate and move people. Where project impacts are minor, a further one to five years is needed to ensure that livelihoods and standard of living are improved. Complex resettlement projects can take much longer, and achievement of improvement of livelihoods can take five to ten years to be successful.

Phase 2: Stakeholder Dialogue

The project design and land-take should be based on dialogue between the project designers and the affected people and local interest groups to reach negotiated agreements on LARR. The establishment of broad community support for the project by all affected communities and LARR for affected people should be the key objective of the project. A key challenge is that project staff tend to consider that stakeholder engagement only needs to be done as part of the ESIA, with tokenistic consultation where plans are presented in public meetings with limited opportunity for affected people to provide comment. Given the severe social impacts and human rights implications of LARR, the engagement process for LARR needs to exceed the minimal consultation requirements of the international standards and be an effective dialogue and agreement-making process.

For this dialogue to be effective, the project must ensure that affected people receive unbiased information about project impacts and opportunities so they can make their own decisions about their lives. For the project to be able to secure land in good time, trust needs to be established with the community. This requires that affected people are provided with independent advice on impacts, the valuation of assets, and how their grievances can be addressed. Whether only one household is impacted or many hundreds, to avoid conflict it is important to engage in dialogue to gain a common understanding of the impacts and reach agreement on mitigation measures. When there are large numbers of affected people, it is not possible to hold detailed individual discussions with each household. In such circumstances, neighbourhood resettlement committees can be efficient in reaching broad community agreement on impacts and benefits. The project should also negotiate the development and implementation of benefit-sharing agreements with local communities.

Sometimes, 'resettlement committees' are mandated by governments. However, these committees are generally bureaucratic mechanisms rather than include representative advocates of the community. They rarely offer unbiased information or independent advice to affected people. The most effective way to build community trust and reach agreement is use of independently moderated multi-stakeholder forums, which have broad community representation supported by independent experts. The project can also facilitate visits by the affected commu-

nity members to similar projects to enable them to see first-hand what is intended and to help them gain an understanding of the LARR process. The process to be used should be outlined in a Community Dialogue Plan, which builds on the Stakeholder Engagement Plan. In the dialogue process, informal owners and users of land, temporary users, tenants, businesses, natural resource users, vulnerable groups, and Indigenous and traditional peoples should all be involved. It is also important to address impacts on host communities by involving them in discussions on understanding the LARR process and how they will benefit.

During the dialogue process, the project can support the community to engage in a visioning process (see Chapter 35) so that they can review scenarios with and without the project, and determine their needs and future aspirations. Civil society groups can facilitate this visioning process. It is also important that a grievance mechanism be established to manage concerns and complaints from the community. For the grievance procedure to operate effectively and build trust, there should be recourse to independent experts to resolve issues where the community is not satisfied with the solutions suggested by the project. When identifying interest groups, especially community members opposed to the project, it is important to ensure that they are protected from reprisals by groups that support the project. Information on protesters and opponents should never be shared in any way that could jeopardise their safety or privacy. Unfortunately, there is a terrible history of people being opposed to some projects being assassinated, with over 200 environmental defenders being murdered annually (Global Witness, 2021).

Phase 3: Wellbeing Baseline Studies

Understanding the social, environmental, and economic context of each project-impacted community is critical for assessing project impacts and the likely success of proposed mitigation measures. It is critical that affected people should be partners in the baseline studies and not just subjects of research. It is recommended that a separate community report is prepared by the affected people outlining what they value in their community and what their aspirations are for their development. A comprehensive way to establish a community profile is for an anthropologist to live with the people for an extended period, an ethnography (see Chapter 30). However, projects are generally unwilling to allocate sufficient time for ethnographies to be undertaken. Since the 1980s, a suite of participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques have been developed enabling local people to share, enhance, and analyse their livelihood context (Chambers, 1994; Narayanasamy, 2009). While some projects use PRA techniques, standard practice has been quantitative surveys supported by focus groups and key person interviews, which are often inadequate to provide a full understanding of the community. At a minimum, a project baseline should comprise: a census of affected people; quantitative socio-economic asset surveys; focus-groups; ethnographies of Indigenous and traditional communities; and interviews with key persons. Any entitlements that derive from LARR should be based on a cut-off date that is agreed with the affected people in accordance with national laws and international standards. The cut-off date must not prevent affected people from practising core ongoing livelihood activities. Where the LARR process is delayed for over 12 months, the project should consider new surveys to update information about assets and entitlements.

The Social Framework for Projects (Smyth & Vanclay, 2017), which was presented at the centre of Figure 23.1, can be used to structure a co-designed holistic process involving technical experts, affected people, and other interest groups. It is critical that the ethnographies,

baseline studies, asset and valuation studies, and specialist studies be conducted by qualified professionals, and that a secure GIS database is established to store all information. The baseline data collected at household level should be verified with each household so all validated assets are accurately recorded.

Phase 4: Wellbeing Impact Assessment and Management Plans

This phase involves the assessment of impacts and the development of management plans through dialogue with the affected people. The assessment of LARR impacts is a separate process to the overall SIA. Because of this, it is named ‘Wellbeing Impact Assessment’, also to reflect that wellbeing should be at the centre of the analysis (Smyth & Vanclay, 2017). In this phase, the RAP and Livelihood Improvement Plan are finalised, as well as an Entitlement Framework, which outlines the compensation to be paid to each category of affected person for particular types of losses. The compensation should be paid at full replacement cost – i.e. sufficient to replace the lost asset without depreciation being taken into account and including all transaction costs. There needs to be an assessment of risks to affected people based on a realistic assessment as to whether the impacts will be mitigated. Unfortunately, standard LARR practice is for RAPs to be developed with broad statements about restoring livelihoods and community cohesion without any substantiation of how this will happen, or evidence as to whether it is even possible.

A key challenge for LARR is its frequent treatment by projects as a sub-component of the ESIA, especially when the ESIA is focused on gaining project approval rather than being a process that seeks to address human rights issues and the social impacts experienced by affected people. ESIA consultants are often tasked with preparing a RAP, as one of many project documents needed to meet international standards, which they typically do independent of the team that will actually implement the RAP. It is important that community dialogue forums are used to discuss impacts, with support from independent experts, and to reach agreement on how local people understand impacts that can often be linked to a potential loss of their identity, sense of place, and community cohesion. Too often, these consultants make recommendations in the RAP that are unrealistic, impractical, or not based on any evidence of likely success and/or that are likely to result in the impoverishment of affected people. Best practice dictates that the precautionary principle should be applied during impact assessment, and that mitigation should be implemented wherever there is a possibility of a significant impact even though there may not be conclusive evidence that it will actually occur (Vanclay, 2003). Ideally, mitigation should involve modification to the project to avoid resettlement through redesign of the project rather than rely on compensation. RAPs generally do not present results-chains demonstrating how predicted outcomes will occur, and, to mitigate the loss of land, they typically rely on high-level recommendations such as ‘provision of alternative livelihood training’. Arguably, the RAP should present a ‘theory of change’ for each key mitigation measure. The theory of change should present evidence based on a benchmarking of similar projects about the likelihood of the expected outcomes from mitigation activities. Where similar interventions have failed elsewhere, then the project should be redesigned to avoid the impacts.

The international standards set a low bar in only requiring restoration of livelihoods and making improvement optional. Consequently, developers also set low targets, which can lead to resettling people back into extreme poverty. Developers tend to see livelihood improve-

ments as discretionary, a social investment, or as a gesture of corporate social responsibility, rather than being an essential part of LARR. Clearly, LARR must result in livelihood improvements to bring affected people above the national poverty line.

The international environmental and social standards require E&S consultants to assess impacts and advise on mitigation, but these consultants seldom have competence in designing livelihood improvement strategies. E&S consultants often propose simplistic alternative livelihoods programmes or cash compensation, which have been shown to fail in practice, and have often resulted in the impoverishment of affected people and serious human rights impacts. The provision of cash compensation rather than in-kind replacement can be attractive to poorer communities, but poor investment decisions by affected people can result in them being rendered homeless and/or without an ongoing viable livelihood. Unrealistic assumptions are often made about the availability of land for purchase or livelihood opportunities in host communities. It is important that experts with sufficient skills and experience in the affected livelihoods (agriculture, forestry, fishing, etc.) engage with the affected people to understand whether their livelihoods can be improved through the project and what is feasible. Where there are significant risks that livelihoods cannot be improved, then a project redesign must be considered. Where conditions allow for livelihood improvement that is demonstrated through benchmarking the outcomes of similar projects elsewhere, then a livelihood improvement plan should be co-developed with the affected people with sufficient time and financial and human resources to achieve improvement.

A significant problem in LARR is where projects adopt a community-wide approach to livelihood programmes and fail to consider the individual needs of each household. Elite capture and speculative behaviours are also significant problems (Ogwang et al., 2019). Elite capture occurs when individuals with higher political, social, or economic status gain disproportionate benefits. A consequence of this is not only increasing inequity, but also that vulnerable households may end up impoverished or landless, especially if there is no special mechanism to ensure that the needs of vulnerable persons are specifically considered. To implement the LARR process effectively, it is essential that RAPs and livelihood improvement commitments are based on the reality of each affected household, the assets they will lose, their capacity to cope with the process, and to adapt to the new situation. This requires that there be individual household plans, which outline the assets, mitigation measures, compensation, replacement assets, livelihood support, and other entitlements they will receive.

Successful livelihood improvement requires maintenance of social cohesion, and access to quality land, natural resources, employment, and markets, which are largely determined by the location of resettlement sites. The Social Framework for Projects (Smyth & Vanclay, 2017) can be used to assess the key economic, social, and livelihood factors that need to be considered in resettlement site selection. It is recommended to develop a series of options, and to engage in dialogue with the affected people and host communities to consider their preferences in the selection of an optimal site.

The design of houses and infrastructure and layouts of resettlement sites is also a significant problem. Much resettlement has used standard designs that were inappropriate in terms of the aspirations of affected people and local culture, and not suited to local environmental conditions. It is critical that a transdisciplinary technical team, together with social and environmental experts, work closely with the affected people to develop designs that are culturally appropriate and easy to maintain.

Phase 5: LARR Agreement-Making

Whether for one household or a whole village, the development and signing of agreements – to accept the loss of home, land, business, and/or access to natural resources in exchange for specified benefits and support as set out in the RAP and Livelihood Improvement Plan – is a significant part of the LARR process. The IFC (2012) performance standards recommend negotiated agreements and require broad community support for the LARR process. The content of the agreements will vary according to national legislation and individual household circumstances, but it is key that proof of broad community support is achieved, which should result in at least 80 per cent of the community agreeing to the LARR management plans. Ultimately, households can accept a proposed compensation agreement, delay, or refuse to accept. They may request reconsideration of the deal, lodge a complaint, protest through various channels (Hanna et al., 2016), and/or take whatever legal recourse is available to them. Protests can cause delays and costs to the project, so it is important that the agreement-making process is seen to be fair. Ideally, multi-stakeholder dialogue forums should be implemented in which independent experts outline to affected people the key impacts and proposed mitigation measures. The project should negotiate LARR agreements with affected households and community benefit agreements with local communities so that the project will have certainty about broad community support and so the community can hold the project to account. Affected people and their leaders have a right to protect their own human rights and can choose to say no to a project land acquisition, restrictions, and resettlement process. Should the community decide that there is not broad community support for the project then further dialogue should take place on whether the project can be redesigned to minimise impacts or be relocated and if this is not possible then the project should not proceed to expropriation unless it meets very narrow criteria for public good.

Phase 6: Implementation Management Systems

When the project moves from planning to the implementation phase, project plans must be converted into implementation work packages, each of which will be subcontracted out. While the processes of managing baseline data collection, stakeholder dialogue, and agreement-making are usually driven by the project's social team, LARR implementation is usually supported by technical experts with skills in construction, valuation, as well as appropriate livelihood areas such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, etc. The construction of houses and resettlement infrastructure will require the tendering and contracting of works based on designs agreed upon in LARR negotiations. The project will need to develop a construction management plan to allow for the timely, effective, and safe implementation of the construction process. The construction management plan must consider the management and supervision skills required, as well as: health, safety, and security; worker transport arrangements; procurement and storage of materials; worker accommodation; environmental protection; and insurance arrangements. Statutory authorities will have to be approached to obtain building permits for the resettlement housing and approval for the resettlement sites.

To ensure effective outcomes, it is critical that the RAP and Livelihood Improvement Plan are translated into implementation plans that are adequately resourced. To enable local enterprises to fairly participate in the tendering process, some capacity building may be needed. There usually is a need to review and revise the RAP and livelihoods budgets to ensure that the

estimated costs are current, given that there is usually significant inflation around resettlement projects. The schedule for the RAP and livelihood plan should be reviewed to ensure there is sufficient time for effective implementation.

Phase 7: LARR Implementation

In this phase, resettlement houses are built and people are moved to the new location. It is important that there be ample assistance for this process. LARR implementation is often where the process fails to deliver, especially when projects take short-cuts in order to get their project underway. Pressure from developers to have affected people move into temporary resettlement should be resisted for many reasons, especially because projects can often be delayed and affected people can sometimes become stranded in temporary accommodation often with significant disruption to their livelihoods for years while they wait for the project to restart. The mitigation programmes outlined in the RAP are also rolled out in this phase. Financial management training should be organised for affected people prior to paying large amounts of compensation.

A significant problem is where contractors are tasked with managing the LARR process but lack the capacity to implement what has been agreed. The project needs to ensure that all contractors have the appropriate skills, including employing community liaison officers to engage with affected people about construction impacts and to negotiate additional land acquisition due to re-routing or changes to project design. However, the developer must maintain a core social team during and post construction to ensure that the LARR process is implemented according to the RAP and to ensure continuity of institutional capacity throughout the process.

To facilitate the project to proceed rapidly, the LARR process is often compressed into an impossibly short timeframe, which can lead to significant problems after the land is acquired and people are resettled. Often, resettlement housing suffers from building defects due to inadequate foundation work, rapid construction, or use of poor-quality materials. There are often problems with maintenance of community infrastructure, such as drainage, roads, water supply, or sewage. It is important to establish buy-in by the government agencies responsible for the ongoing maintenance of those services. It is also critical that the government agrees to staff any new educational or health facilities that are provided as part of the LARR process.

Phase 8: Monitoring and Close-Out of LARR and Project Construction and Operations

Only when the LARR process has been completed should the project commence construction on land where people were living. Good practice requires that the project maximises local content through local employment and local procurement. Once the affected people have been moved into their new houses and have received compensation and other benefits, many projects are keen to quickly close-out the LARR process. However, experience has shown that affected people need support over an extended period of time, with livelihood improvement often taking up to ten years where people had land-based livelihoods. Where the LARR process has been top-down and affected people have had limited autonomy, this can lead to them becoming passive rather than actively involved in managing their own life going forward. This tends to lead to a downward spiral and an ongoing need for support. It is far better to assist and empower people in making their own decisions and taking some level of responsibility for their lives.

A thorough monitoring of the LARR process and outcomes is needed, with corrective action where issues are detected. Monitoring is an ongoing task that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators as well as general signals of wellbeing to provide management and other stakeholders with an indication of the extent to which the RAP objectives have been met. The monitoring process should begin at the very start of the project, with appropriate indicators developed to establish the project baseline, against which progress can be measured (see Chapter 37).

A key monitoring challenge is that the ESIA baseline is often inadequate for the level of detail needed for LARR. Thus, LARR experts must be involved in establishing a joint ESIA/LARR baseline data collection system to ensure that all appropriate information are gathered and recorded in a way that can measure changes in the wellbeing of the affected people over time. Good practice is that affected people are also involved in monitoring the LARR process. This can be done by building the capacity of trusted community representatives to observe and measure progress throughout the project lifecycle. Depending on the success of the livelihood improvement programmes, and when the monitoring reports give some sense that things have normalised, after five or more years a ‘close-out audit’ should be done. The close-out audit is a formal process undertaken by an independent LARR expert to establish to all stakeholders that resettled people are adequately established in their new situation, their living standards and livelihoods have been improved, and that the project has properly compensated affected people for any lost assets and for the inconvenience and suffering incurred. Should this not be confirmed by the audit, then the close-out must be postponed and additional support provided until such time that this would be the case.

CONCLUSION

Land acquisition for projects displaces people, and creates many social impacts on the lives of those who are affected. Attempts to address these impacts through planned resettlement and livelihood improvement programmes, although sometimes well intentioned, have largely failed to lead to improvement in the wellbeing of affected peoples. In worst-case situations, people have been impoverished by project-induced displacement, and have sometimes been rendered homeless. SIA practice has generally failed to adequately acknowledge the extreme harms wrought upon people forced to move to make way for projects. Worse still is that some SIA practitioners have been complicit in human rights harms by maintaining a pretence that LARR impacts can be readily mitigated or redressed, and by their writing of Resettlement Action Plans that are manifestly inadequate.

Whether LARR is actioned by government or a private sector developer, there are some key principles that apply. First, expropriation must be avoided. Expropriation is alienating and debilitating, and will always lead to negative outcomes. LARR processes should only proceed on the basis of a negotiated agreement. Second, because of the potential severity of the harms created, resettlement must be avoided wherever possible. Much more effort should be made by projects to consider how project design might be changed to avoid the need for resettlement. If resettlement can’t be avoided, perhaps the need for the project should be reconsidered. Third, LARR should only be done by experienced and qualified LARR experts. It would be professional negligence and malpractice for unqualified people to take a lead role in writing or implementing Resettlement Action Plans. Last but not least, much more resources and

effort must be put into improving resettlement outcomes. Affected people must be provided with improved housing and infrastructure, and adequate support to re-establish community structures, and to improve their livelihoods.

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24. Livelihoods and social impact assessment

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INTRODUCTION

When projects impact on people's livelihoods, the potential harms to health and wellbeing are wide-ranging. Losing access to the resources necessary to meet basic food needs (or having this access restricted) can lead to malnutrition, hunger, and other health problems. Insecurity of personal conditions can also lead to health impacts through trauma, emotional harm, mental distress, and to a loss of dignity and a sense of self-worth. This can impact on full enjoyment of family life, and lead to loss of social networks and social cohesion. People may be forced to live in poor or unsafe conditions. Lack of access to clean water and proper sanitation facilities can lead to waterborne diseases and other health problems. The impacts disproportionately affect the most vulnerable groups. People may not be able to afford healthcare or be able to access other resources necessary for maintaining good health. Families may not be able to afford to send their children to school. Cultural life may be disrupted, and traditions and cultural identity can be lost (van der Ploeg & Vanclay, 2017). All of these issues should be considered in the discourse and practice of social impact assessment (SIA).

SIA practice, however, is often inadequate in addressing livelihoods impacts. This chapter highlights the relevant international standards and the main practice gaps, and how to address these. We draw on our collective experience in providing advice to projects and on the research collaboration between TotalEnergies and Community Insights Group, which was aimed at finding better ways to address livelihoods impacts associated with energy projects. We outline a set of key actions for development projects to follow in the assessment and management of livelihoods impacts, and we conclude with implications for SIA practitioners.

INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS FOR ADDRESSING LIVELIHOOD IMPACTS

In this chapter, when we refer to 'international standards', we mean the composite set of practices that would normally be expected of projects that restrict people's access to their livelihood resources. These standards include the requirements of lenders, international organisations, voluntary industry initiatives, and human rights instruments. Rebuilding livelihoods is perhaps the most challenging aspect of putting these standards into practice (Vanclay, 2017; Esteves, 2021). This section distils what the international environmental and social standards and human rights standards have to say about addressing livelihood impacts.

Over the last four decades, the various environmental and social policies and standards for project-induced displacement have been much influenced by Michael Cernea (1997, 1999, 2003, 2005, 2008; Cernea & Maldonado, 2018; Cernea & McDowell, 2000). Today,

the Environmental and Social Standards (ESS) of the World Bank (2017), the Performance Standards (PS) of the International Finance Corporation (IFC, 2012), and the resettlement policies of the various other multilateral development banks have converged, and now have similarities in their scope, architecture, principles, thematic coverage and formulation (Price, 2015; Vanclay & Hanna, 2019). Nuances are found in the extent to which the key issues are addressed: vulnerability; gender; human rights; Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC); Indigenous peoples; climate change; and ecosystem services (Himberg, 2015). The discussion that follows delves into the treatment of specific issues: understanding livelihood and livelihood impacts; avoiding or minimising livelihoods impacts; restoring vs enhancing the livelihoods of displaced persons; specific attention to vulnerable households, women, Indigenous peoples and host communities; and monitoring and evaluation of livelihood restoration programmes. A brief synthesis of critical perspectives on the standards as they relate to livelihood impacts is also provided.

Understanding Livelihood and Livelihood Impacts

Resettlement standards have converged around the use of an all-encompassing yet non-specific definition of livelihood, for example:

- The IFC (2012), the World Bank (2017), and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB, 2020) have adopted the same definition of livelihood, which ‘refers to the full range of means that individuals, families, and communities utilize to make a living, such as wage-based income, agriculture, fishing, foraging, other natural resource-based livelihoods, petty trade, and bartering’ (IFC, 2012, PS5, p. 1).
- Performance Requirement 5 (PR5) of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) expresses a similar understanding, referring to ‘the full range of means that individuals, families and communities utilise to make a living, such as wages from employment; cash income earned through an enterprise or through sale of produce, goods, handicrafts or services; rental income from land or premises; income from a harvest or animal husbandry, share of a harvest (such as various sharecropping arrangements) or livestock production; self-produced goods or produce used for exchange or barter; self-consumed goods or produce; food, materials, fuel and goods for personal or household use or trade derived from natural or common resources; pensions and various types of government allowances’ (EBRD, 2019, p. 27).
- Operational Safeguard 2 (OS2) of the African Development Bank (AfDB) defines livelihood as ‘the full range of economic, social and cultural capabilities, assets, and other means that individuals, families and communities use to satisfy their needs’ (AfDB, 2013, p. 31).

Other authors have pointed out that understanding livelihoods also requires exploring issues such as education, health and social cohesion (Reddy et al., 2015). Conceptual approaches and tools such as the Sustainable Livelihood Framework (DFID, 1999; Narula et al., 2017; UNDP, 2017; Natarajan et al., 2022) and the Social Framework for Projects (Smyth & Vanclay, 2017) assist in analysing livelihoods and how these are potentially impacted.

Avoiding or Minimising Livelihood Impacts Associated with Displacement

Common across the resettlement standards is an understanding that involuntary resettlement refers not only to physical displacement (through loss of housing and possible relocation), but also to ‘economic displacement’ (defined as a ‘loss of assets or access to assets that leads to loss of income sources or other means of livelihood’) that arises from project-related land acquisition and/or restrictions on land use (IFC, 2012, PS5, p. 1). IFC PS5, World Bank ESS5, EBRD PR5, AfDB OS2, and Safeguard Requirements 2 of the Asian Development Bank (ADB, 2009) all mandate that, just as with physical displacement, economic displacement should be avoided or minimised wherever possible, and that all viable alternative project designs should be explored. A core principle of economic displacement is that ‘restriction of access is displacement’ and that this restriction can have severe negative livelihood-related consequences (Cernea, 2005).

The primary and fundamental principle – that displacement and involuntary resettlement should be avoided wherever feasible – has been neglected by an increasing number of resettlement projects, as evidenced in the growing number of persons being displaced (Neef & Singer, 2015; Cernea & Maldonado, 2018; Rogers & Wilmsen, 2020). However, while the magnitude of displacement is disconcerting, the avoidance principle needs to be weighed against the impacts that communities could experience if they are not resettled and have to live near project sites. In instances where companies may seek to avoid substantial investment of time, financial and human resources to restore livelihoods, they may misapply the avoidance principle, leading to serious adverse impacts on local communities (Connell, 2015; Owen & Kemp, 2015). The EBRD PR5 highlights the potential benefits, stating that:

avoidance may not be the preferred approach in situations where public health or safety would be adversely affected as a result. There may also be situations where resettlement can provide direct development opportunities for households or communities, including improved housing and public health conditions, strengthened security of tenure or other improvements to local living standards. (EBRD, 2019, p. 28)

Restoring Should Be Enhancing the Livelihoods of Displaced Persons

Where it is not possible to avoid resettlement, the international standards generally require that displaced persons are to be assisted in their efforts to improve their livelihoods and standards of living, or at least to restore them to pre-displacement levels. That such restoration is deemed acceptable is much criticised (Rosien, 2010; Oxfam, 2013, 2014; Connell, 2015; ADB, 2020; UNHRC, 2020). Here, we use the term ‘livelihood restoration’ to mean a set of activities oriented to a goal of a better standard of living than the pre-displacement state.

Resettlement standards require that affected persons are compensated for loss of income or livelihood sources at full replacement cost. For example, IFC PS5 stipulates that ‘payment of cash compensation for lost assets may be appropriate where (i) livelihoods are not land-based; (ii) livelihoods are land-based but the land taken for the project is a small fraction of the affected asset and the residual land is economically viable; or (iii) active markets for land, housing, and labor exist, displaced persons use such markets, and there is sufficient supply of land and housing’ (IFC, 2012, PS5, p. 6). These standards recognise that cash compensation alone may be insufficient to restore livelihoods: ‘in addition to compensation for lost assets, ... economically displaced persons whose livelihoods or income levels are adversely affected will

also be provided opportunities to improve, or at least restore, their means of income-earning capacity, production levels, and standards of living' (IFC, 2012, PS5, p. 7). The measures include the provision of replacement land, access to alternative natural resources 'with equivalent livelihood-earning potential' or alternative income-earning opportunities, depending on the context and specific needs of the affected people (IFC, 2012, PS5, p. 7). Livelihood measures should include transitional support to all economically displaced persons, based on a reasonable estimate of the time required to restore their income-earning capacity, production levels, and standards of living.

The standards and their guidance notes provide recommendations according to the type of livelihood: land-based (with or without recognised land rights), wage-based, or for an enterprise-based livelihood. Sector guidance for certain specific livelihoods (e.g. fisheries) has been developed to assist projects, such as IFC's *Addressing Project Impacts on Fishing-Based Livelihoods* (IFC, 2015). In order to arrive at the most feasible and desirable outcomes, livelihood restoration planning requires a high level of interaction with affected people (Cernea, 2005) and host communities. All the standards require an effective stakeholder or community engagement process. Affected people must be given the opportunity to express their views on project risks, livelihood impacts, and mitigation and enhancement measures. This involves in-depth exchange of views and information, with iterative consultation leading to a negotiated agreement.

Specific Attention to Vulnerable Households, Women, Indigenous Peoples and Host Communities

Resettlement standards acknowledge that some individuals and groups may be differentially or disproportionately affected by the project 'because of their disadvantaged or vulnerable status' (IFC, 2012, PS1, p. 4). A vast majority of Environmental, Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs) and Livelihood Restoration Plans consider vulnerable groups in general terms, such as 'women', 'the elderly', 'youth', 'the disabled' and 'Indigenous communities'. The dominant understanding of vulnerability is based on generic categories, without much questioning of the circumstances of vulnerability, as would be provided by more reflexive or holistic approaches, such as an intersectional approach (Kuran et al., 2020; Chisty et al., 2021; Adaptation Fund, 2022, see Chapter 17).

IFC PS1 states, that 'This disadvantaged or vulnerable status may stem from an individual's or group's race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status. The client should also consider factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, culture, literacy, sickness, physical or mental disability, poverty or economic disadvantage, and dependence on unique natural resources' (IFC, 2012, PS1, p. 4). The EBRD Performance Requirements provide a more detailed definition of vulnerable groups:

people or groups of people who may be more adversely affected by project impacts than others by virtue of characteristics such as their gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, indigenous status, age (including children, youths and the elderly), physical or mental disability, literacy, political views, or social status. Vulnerable individuals and/or groups may also include, but are not limited to, people in vulnerable situations, such as people living below the poverty line, the landless, single-headed households, natural resource dependent communities, migrant workers, refugees, internally displaced people, or other displaced persons who may not be protected through national legislation and/or public international law. (EBRD, 2019, p. 4)

According to the IFC and EBRD standards, special provisions must be made for disadvantaged or vulnerable groups, including the collection of disaggregated baseline data, differentiated measures for stakeholder engagement (to allow the effective participation of vulnerable persons), impact assessment, and the design, implementation and monitoring of specific assistance measures tailored to the different needs of vulnerable groups.

While recognising context-specificity, the experiences of resettlement practitioners have largely demonstrated that women suffer negative impacts of displacement in a disproportionate manner and that women face structural barriers such as marginalisation in decision-making or unfavourable legal frameworks (Salcedo-La Viña & Notess, 2017; Salcedo-La Viña, 2019; Wilson, 2019). International standards acknowledge the potential differentiated impacts on women and men and the need to understand both women's and men's views generally through separate engagement and data-collection activities. Women are usually considered to be a potential vulnerable group as a generic category (similar to children, persons with disabilities, youth and minorities). The IDB (2020) is the only development bank to have a standalone standard on gender: *Environmental and Social Performance Standard 9, Gender Equality*. The European Investment Bank (EIB) explicitly references gender in its *Standard 7, Vulnerable Groups, Indigenous Peoples and Gender* (EIB, 2022).

Lender standards include special safeguards and provisions for Indigenous peoples and impacts on their livelihoods (e.g. IFC PS7, World Bank ESS7 and EBRD PR7). Most require FPIC, although only under certain circumstances. In recognition of the reluctance of many African governments to formally recognise certain ethnic groups as 'Indigenous', the World Bank ESS7 has extended protections traditionally reserved for Indigenous peoples to 'Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities' (World Bank, 2017).

A review of 29 IFC-supported projects from 2012–2020 regarding their implementation of FPIC in response to IFC PS7 requirements showed a wide range of interpretations, justifications and inconsistency in how FPIC was applied (NomoGaia & Salcito, 2020). Shortcomings included: unclear criteria for PS7 and FPIC applicability; elusive justifications of the application or not of PS7 and FPIC; premature decisions on whether or not to apply PS7 and FPIC; lack of human rights expertise; and lack of clear identification of adverse impacts on the livelihoods of Indigenous communities.

Host communities are another stakeholder group that international standards require projects to consider. They should be entitled to compensation, mitigation measures, livelihood arrangements and access to a grievance mechanism. This is a critical component of livelihood restoration to which projects typically do not pay sufficient attention (van der Ploeg & Vanclay, 2017).

Monitoring and Evaluation of Livelihood Restoration Programmes

Resettlement standards require projects to design and implement monitoring and evaluation plans, which can be integrated into social management plans or livelihood restoration plans. Some propose an external panel of experts to evaluate the sustainable restoration of livelihoods as part of project completion measures (e.g. IFC PS5).

Critical Perspectives on Standards Relating to Livelihood Impacts

The academic literature on international standards for addressing livelihood impacts mostly fall into two categories: critical appraisals of the standards per se, and case studies that highlight different interpretations of these standards and implementation challenges. Few articles consider livelihood impacts as a standalone topic (Esteves, 2021). Livelihood restoration requirements remain rather ambiguous and unclear, raising the necessity for greater prominence of the issue of livelihoods in social safeguards and more stringent livelihood restoration design, implementation and monitoring (Cernea & Maldonado, 2018; Esteves, 2021). This echoes the debates in the fields of humanitarian assistance, displacement and refugee livelihoods that have long approached the issue of livelihoods from a technical perspective, neglecting the need to adapt to local contexts (De Vriese, 2006).

Livelihood restoration requires a development perspective (Perera, 2014; Price, 2015), time, creativity and negotiation (Rowan, 2017; Price & Tagliarino, 2019). Implementation of this development perspective is hindered by international standards that encourage proponents to formulate expert-led management plans rather than to negotiate agreements with affected persons and communities (Lillywhite et al., 2015; Owen & Kemp, 2015). Furthermore, the imprecise specification of livelihood restoration gives room for different interpretations and practices.

Many case studies have demonstrated how challenging the application of international resettlement and livelihood restoration standards can be (Connell, 2015; Owen & Kemp, 2015; Kabra, 2018; van der Ploeg & Vanclay, 2018). While the objectives set by the different standards converge, the manner in which they are applied and the outcomes vary. Indeed, 'it may be possible to comply on paper with the safeguard standards and still completely miss out the groups that are actually affected adversely, while focusing attention of the safeguard provisions on groups that are only mildly affected' (Kabra, 2018, p. 277).

Whereas the replacement of adequate housing or settlements is generally a once-off challenge with short-term results, improving livelihoods is much more complex (Price & Tagliarino, 2019). Kabra illustrates these challenges through a renewable energy project in India, with unsatisfactory outcomes in spite of initial goodwill. These challenges included: disconnect between the interests of the financial managers, project staff in charge of implementing safeguards, and field-level managers; inadequate budget allocation for implementing the Livelihood Restoration Plan; misidentification of impacts and project-affected people; ill-trained project staff; deviations from the original Livelihood Restoration Plan; local micro-politics; and vulnerability and exclusion (Kabra, 2018). Many writers have highlighted the tensions between national regulations and international standards, differences in interpretation, and difficulties in implementation (Gulakov et al., 2020; Kahangirwe & Vanclay, 2022). Many human rights organisations have raised concerns about the fact that the social standards often fall short with respect to human rights principles. A human rights perspective can highly benefit livelihood restoration planning and implementation (van der Ploeg & Vanclay, 2017; Esteves, 2021).

HUMAN RIGHTS PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS

The loss of livelihoods has human rights implications. As specified in the *Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-based Evictions and Displacement* (United Nations, 2007), competent authorities (State and any other responsible parties) must ensure safe and secure access to essential food, potable water and sanitation, basic shelter and housing, livelihood sources, fodder for livestock and access to common property resources previously depended upon. The Basic Principles also require adequate consultation and participation of affected peoples, with appropriate legal protections. For instance, if an ‘agreement cannot be reached on a proposed alternative [to eviction] an independent body having constitutional authority, such as a court of law, tribunal or ombudsperson should mediate, arbitrate or adjudicate as appropriate’, and, in the case of evictions, there must be legal review and ‘guaranteed timely access to legal counsel, without payment if necessary’ for affected individuals or households (United Nations, 2007, p. 9).

Conformance with the United Nations (2011) *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* (UNGP) requires the private sector to understand which human rights are relevant to displacement and livelihood impacts, and how human rights principles can help address some of the key challenges of involuntary resettlement and livelihood restoration (van der Ploeg & Vanclay, 2017, 2018). Examples of relevant human rights at risk include:

- The right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment (UN General Assembly, resolution 76/300, 28 July 2022)
- The right to a standard of living adequate for the health and wellbeing (UDHR, Art. 25; ICESCR, Art. 11)
- The right to adequate food (ICESCR, Art. 11)
- The right to education (ICESCR, Art. 13)
- The right to equality and non-discrimination (UDHR, Art. 7, ICESCR Art. 2)
- The right to freely dispose of natural wealth and resources (ICESCR, Art. 1 and Art. 25)
- The right to freely pursue economic, social and cultural development (ICESCR, Art. 1)
- The right to property (UDHR, Art. 17)
- The right to self-determination (ICESCR, Art. 1)
- The right to social security (UDHR, Art. 22, ICESCR Art. 9)
- The right to work and the right to protection against unemployment (UDHR, Art. 23; ICESCR, Art. 6)
- The rights of the child (United Nations, 1989).

The Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) was developed as a set of principles to ensure a common understanding of human rights in development projects and programmes (United Nations, 2003). The HRBA uses the international human rights framework as reference and builds on three main principles: equality and non-discrimination, participation and empowerment, and accountability. The application of the HRBA entails the identification of rights-holders (including individuals, families and communities) and their entitlements, and duty-bearers (with States as primary duty-bearers) and their obligations (United Nations, 2003; Foresti & Ludi, 2007; van der Ploeg & Vanclay, 2017). Human rights instruments encompass legally binding agreements for signatory countries – for example the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (United Nations, 1966a) and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (United Nations 1966b) – and non-binding agree-

ments (such as the UNGP and the UN *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*). Human rights standards require ‘competent authorities’ to ensure that anyone forcibly displaced by development has access to livelihood support. The main human rights related to economic displacement and livelihood impacts are given below, listed by the instrument in which they are established:

- *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)*: ‘everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment’ (United Nations, 1948, p. 6) (Art. 23); ‘everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property’ (United Nations, 1948, p. 5) (Art. 17); and ‘everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and wellbeing of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control’ (United Nations, 1948, p. 7) (Art. 25).
- *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)*: ‘all peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law. In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence’ (United Nations, 1966a, p. 1) (Art. 1); it recognises the rights to work (Art. 6); to enjoy just and favourable conditions of work (Art. 7); and ‘to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including an adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions’ (United Nations, 1966a, p. 4) (Art. 11). The United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) has issued guidance on a number of aspects of the right to an adequate standard of living, namely on food, water and housing, food sovereignty, and the right of peasants and other people working in rural areas to choose which technologies suit them best (UNESCO, 2020).
- *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)*: all people may ‘freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development’ (United Nations, 1966b, p. 2) (Art. 1); ‘all peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law. In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence’ (United Nations, 1966b, p. 2) (Art. 2); ‘everyone lawfully within the territory of a State shall, within that territory, have the right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose his residence’ (United Nations, 1966b, p. 7) (Art. 11); and ‘in those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language’ (United Nations, 1966b, p. 14) (Art. 27).
- *ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (C169)*: Indigenous people have ‘the right to decide their own priorities for the process of development as it affects their lives, beliefs, institutions and spiritual wellbeing and the lands they occupy or otherwise use, and to exercise control, to the extent possible, over their own economic, social and cultural development’ (ILO, 1989, Art. 7).

- *Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)*: is a mechanism to ensure the equal access of Indigenous peoples to their rights that is reflected in various forms of international law, such as ILO C169 and the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (UNOHCHR, 2018). The UNDRIP contains provisions relevant to the right of Indigenous peoples to an adequate standard of living. The UNDRIP does not create legally binding obligations, but informs the way governments engage with and protect the rights of Indigenous peoples. Of particular relevance in business contexts and livelihood restoration are the rights to lands, territories and resources (Oxfam, 2019).
- *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination*: ‘ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular: (a) The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings; (b) The right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment; (c) The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service and the right to receive vocational training and retraining ...; (d) The right to equal remuneration ...; and (e) The right to social security’ (United Nations, 1979, Art. 11). The Convention requires special attention to rural women.

With the growing recognition of human rights risks associated with project-induced displacement and the responsibility of private operators to fulfil human rights, academics and practitioners have encouraged operators to take proactive measures (Götzmann et al., 2016; Esteves et al., 2017; van der Ploeg & Vanclay, 2017). This recognition has translated into various codes of conduct, guidance, principles and tools, for example:

- *United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs)*: establishes the responsibility of business to address human rights impacts (United Nations, 2011). The guidelines identify complementary responsibilities of the State and private companies. The UNGPs distinguish ‘right-holders’ and ‘duty-bearers’ and encourage a shift in companies’ responsibility for their human rights impacts and the way they manage associated risks (Götzmann et al., 2016; Kemp & Vanclay, 2013).
- *Gender Dimensions of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights*: an adaptation of the UNGPs to give explicit recognition to gender and how women are specifically affected by business enterprises. For example, the gender guidance for Guiding Principle 11 states that businesses ‘have a responsibility to avoid infringing women’s human rights and to address adverse human rights impacts with which they are involved’ and ‘should ensure that their land acquisition and compensation processes neither reinforce gender discriminatory landownership practices nor adversely affect women’s livelihoods and subsistence’ (UNWGBHR, 2019, p. 18). Commenting on Guiding Principle 11, the Working Group insists that ‘business enterprises should ensure that their land acquisition and compensation processes neither reinforce gender discriminatory landownership practices nor adversely affect women’s livelihoods and subsistence’ (UNWGBHR, 2019, p. 21).
- The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s *OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises* was adopted in 1976 and updated in 2011, and the *OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct* was adopted in 2018. These set out the due diligence responsibility of companies to identify, prevent and mitigate adverse impacts on human rights (OECD, 2011, 2018).
- *United Nations Global Compact*: encourages companies to integrate ten universally accepted principles covering human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption into

their business practices. More than 9,000 companies participate in the Global Compact (UNGC, 2023).

- *FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT)*: established in 2012 and revised in 2022. This publication discusses risks relating to rights of land tenure and access, rights to food, and sustainable livelihoods and sets out actions ‘to improve the governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests ... to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food’ (FAO, 2022, p. iv).
- *Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)*: sets out standards for sustainability reporting to improve transparency and accountability of sustainable development impacts. ‘The GRI Standards enable an organization to publicly disclose its most significant impacts on the economy, environment, and people, including impacts on their human rights and how the organization manages these impacts’ (GRI, 2023, p. 7).
- *Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI)*: adopted in 2006, these are six principles relating to sustainability in investing. The principles focus on ESG (environmental, social and governance) frameworks for investment, with an emphasis on good governance and accountability through disclosure and reporting of ESG issues related to investments (PRI, 2021).

Increasingly, the UNGP and OECD guidelines are also being embedded in ‘hard law’, as seen in the European Commission, France, The Netherlands, United Kingdom, etc., and outcomes of litigations between extractive companies and host governments (Diggs et al., 2019). In theory, the enforceability of some human rights instruments potentially differentiates them from environmental and social standards (Götzmann et al., 2016). However, in practice, academics and practitioners have expressed concerns about the lack of enforcement provisions in mechanisms such as the UNGP, which is generally regarded as the ‘most authoritative instrument in this realm’ (Kemp & Vanclay, 2013, p. 89). Another concern is that human rights issues are hard to identify and not always easy to apply in project-specific contexts (Esteves et al., 2017). Nevertheless, the HRBA is valuable in informing better approaches to managing livelihoods impacts: in strengthening the context analysis (baseline conditions), unpacking livelihood impacts and providing entry points for monitoring frameworks of livelihood restoration programmes.

KEY ACTIONS FOR ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF LIVELIHOODS IMPACTS

Based on our review of the international standards, we propose nine key actions for development projects. This section outlines the justifying arguments, drawing on the literature.

Key Action 1: Design the Project to Avoid Displacement As Much As Possible

International standards for environmental performance require projects to apply the mitigation hierarchy to the management of impacts: avoid, minimise, restore, compensate/offset (João et al., 2011). Even so, avoiding economic displacement is rarely a factor in informing relevant conceptual design features, such as the amount of landtake and location relative to how

people access natural resources they rely on for their livelihoods (Esteves, 2021). Standards recognise the risk of impoverishment suffered by displaced persons, with disproportionate risk usually falling on vulnerable groups (Adam et al., 2015; Kabra, 2016; Vanclay, 2017). Cernea's Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction (IRR) framework identifies eight risks of resettlement: landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalisation, increased morbidity and mortality, food insecurity, loss of access to common property resources, and social disarticulation (the weakening of social and community ties) (Cernea, 1997).

Resettlement is rarely a development opportunity, and even minimal livelihood restoration is not usually achieved until several years after displacement (Rogers & Wilmsen, 2020). Case studies point to reasons why resettlement and livelihood restoration fail, including: lack of understanding of livelihood context and impacts; lack of resources; inappropriate compensation measures; underestimation of the impoverishment risks; and deviation from original livelihood restoration planning because of a lack of resources, time or capacity (Vanclay, 2017; Kabra, 2018; Rogers & Wilmsen, 2020). Even though resettlement standards require specific measures for transitional support, this can be underestimated or deliberately minimised (Lillywhite et al., 2015). Many case studies show how displacement has increased poverty, including of those who are displaced as well as those in host communities. In a rutile mining project in Sierra Leone, for example, 90 per cent of affected persons interviewed reported that their quality of life had considerably worsened after displacement because of the loss of their traditional livelihoods, which included fishing, hunting, processing of wild palm fruit, timber harvesting, and other livelihood activities (Wilson, 2019).

Key Action 2: Assess Livelihood Impacts and Risks

The assessment of livelihood impacts is essential to inform avoidance and minimisation decisions and mitigation measures. This requires SIA practitioners to work alongside specialists from a range of disciplines. At the early conceptual design phase, before the project footprint is decided and long before detailed studies during the ESIA process, scoping studies are needed to inform the identification of potential impacts and risks. Scoping helps determine whether there are design options to avoid or minimise livelihood impacts (Rowan, 2017).

The consequences of underestimating livelihood impacts and cumulative impacts, and of not taking appropriate measures to anticipate and respond to those impacts, were revealed in research on the Tekeze dam in northern Ethiopia (Gizachew, 2017). Here, the impacts on grazing lands and the cattle economy had strong negative economic and social consequences for local communities, including: friction with host communities; competition for the grazing lands available; disruption of social stability; and further impoverishment of the poorest and reduction in resilience. In this farming context, 'cattlelessness' constitutes an impoverishment risk that has significant consequences in terms of food security, identity, culture, and human rights violations (Gizachew, 2017).

Livelihood impacts may be more difficult to anticipate than physical displacement impacts (Esteves, 2021). The assessment of livelihood impacts should be carried out through a holistic analysis, taking into consideration the multiple and interdependent layers of vulnerability at individual, household, settlement, community and inter-community levels. A holistic analysis of livelihood impacts begins with understanding the context, including the macro-level factors that influence livelihood systems (social, economic, political, environmental, demographic,

historic, and infrastructural). This data may be derived from secondary sources, such as official statistics, NGO or academic studies, and administrative reports.

Identifying potential livelihood impacts involves looking at livelihood resources, institutions and organisations that support livelihood systems and livelihood strategies. Data collection at the community, household or individual levels can be done through a combination of participatory tools including key informant interviews, household surveys, storytelling, scoring matrices, income and expenditure interviews, market visits, financial records analysis, observation, community profiles, multidisciplinary landscape assessment, most significant change methods, focus group discussions, and technology-based tools such as volunteered geographic information that provides in-situ data (Biggs et al., 2014).

Livelihood impact identification also requires understanding how livelihood loss may lead to complex interrelated negative consequences, including reduced access to food, disruption of the social environment, damaging effects on physical and mental health (e.g. increased anxiety), increased domestic violence, loss of access to education, security, housing and infrastructure – with consequences for both the displaced and host communities (who may also be economically displaced as a result of ceding land for use by displaced people). Assessing livelihood impacts involves much more than the traditional focus on income and employment, and must include consideration of tangible (such as loss of farming land, forest and fish resources, disruption of business activities and change in agropastoral practices for farmers and herders) and intangible impacts (such as inequalities, violence, attachment, mental wellbeing and stress about uncertainty or change in livelihood patterns). Assessing the livelihood impacts amongst households who depend on the informal economy is particularly complex (Choi, 2015; Weng, 2015).

Assessing livelihood impacts takes time (Rowan, 2017), calls for specific social and economic expertise (e.g. on fishing, farming, business), and a deep understanding of the local context and livelihood dependencies and interdependencies. ESIA schedules are usually too short to identify and assess livelihood impacts. For example, local fishing, farming, hunting or harvesting activities generally do not occur all year round but follow seasonal patterns or migratory cycles. Flexibility in ESIA should also be provided for the inclusion of unanticipated impacts that may be identified during the assessment.

Integrating human rights into livelihood impact assessment enables a comprehensive and holistic analysis. For example, loss of income may impact on the right to education of the children or the right to a standard of living adequate for health and wellbeing. An HRBA demands meaningful engagement with local communities whose livelihoods may be impacted by the project. It considers the significance of the impact from affected people's perspectives, and encourages disaggregated data for robust baseline studies and impact assessment (IPIECA & DIHR, 2013). It is good practice to embed relevant human right expertise in the assessment team, as early as the scoping phase. Applying a human rights perspective in SIA will inform the desired outcomes as well as the process to be used, which should be based on the human rights core principles of participation and inclusion, equality and non-discrimination and accountability and the rule of law (United Nations, 2003; van der Ploeg & Vanclay, 2017). In some contexts, host governments and regulators may be reluctant to integrate human rights considerations into ESIA. In these situations, alternative assessment processes will need to be performed outside the regulatory requirements of the ESIA process (IPIECA & DIHR, 2013).

Livelihood impact assessment also needs to take into consideration climate change. Climate change threatens livelihood security and food security (crop failure and rising food prices),

exacerbates water insecurity, disrupts access to basic ecosystems services (reducing the productivity of agricultural land), degrades habitats that particularly vulnerable people are dependent on, threatens gender equalities, worsens living conditions, and reduces opportunities for income generation.

Key Action 3: Unpack Vulnerability

Economic displacement may affect individuals and groups differentially. Even though international standards require collection of disaggregated data, assessment of differentiated impacts, and design of specific measures for vulnerable groups, livelihood vulnerability rarely gets the attention and implementation resources it deserves (Meher, 2009; Somayaji & Talwar, 2011; Neef & Singer, 2015). A risk of the vulnerability lens is that it may stigmatise and stereotype those deemed vulnerable. Designating only specific categories of affected peoples as vulnerable may be equated more with the need for greater support and less with empowerment or participation, reinforcing dependency. Relying on pre-defined categories to considering vulnerable groups (e.g. women, children, the elderly and the disabled) runs the risk of excluding potentially affected individuals and groups and neglecting their interests and needs. To avoid these pitfalls and ensure the concept is used to analyse the specific disadvantages that the economically displaced people suffer, vulnerability needs to be adapted to local and situational contexts, and thus it may be more appropriate to speak of ‘vulnerabilities’ (Timmer et al., 2021). The intersectional perspective calls for recognition of context-specific, interrelated and dynamic variables such as health conditions, socio-economic barriers, social isolation, power relations, access to and dependence on land and resources, migration background, and the lack of rights awareness (Kuran et al., 2020; Chisty et al., 2021). By unpacking vulnerability, the intersectional perspective shifts the analysis from a generic group approach to a human-centred approach (Esteves, 2021).

Shedding light on the multidimensional, context-specific and intersecting gendered vulnerabilities (e.g. health limitations, restricted access to land and resources, unfavourable legal framework, lack of decision-making power, gender-based violence) increases an understanding of how livelihood impacts can affect *some* women in a disproportionate or different manner (Salcedo-La Viña & Notess, 2017; Salcedo-La Viña, 2019; Wilson, 2019). Detailed disaggregated data and analysis are needed, for example, to understand the impacts of the loss of livelihoods and economic opportunities on women who rely on subsistence or small-scale agricultural livelihoods and informal work (tending land, gathering food, fuel and medicines, cultivating and selling agricultural produces). The impacts on food security and food-generating activities (agriculture, forest products or fishing) can also place an additional burden on some vulnerable women and have significant impacts on their families and dependents. Some women may be more vulnerable than others, which reasserts the need to take a contextually nuanced intersectional approach (DIHR, 2019).

Key Action 4: Ensure Affected People Can Negotiate Livelihoods Support

Livelihoods is the most difficult aspect of negotiating resettlement (Reddy et al., 2015; Price & Tagliarino, 2019). The idea of ‘negotiation’ being applied to project-induced displacement is relatively recent. However, since the 1980s, resettlement policies have emphasised the need for ‘participation’ and ‘informed consultation’. Despite the fact that international standards

require livelihood improvement, agreements have generally focused only on compensation for tangible assets, with little consideration of how compensation translates into better quality of life for displaced persons on a sustainable basis (Price & Tagliarino, 2019).

A justification for negotiation is the expectations arising from use of a human rights lens. Access to, use of and control over land and livelihoods directly affect people's enjoyment of their human rights (Shift, 2018). However, the negotiations for in-kind or cash compensation for the loss of livelihood resources have been described as a 'compromise equilibrium', and criticised for their power and information asymmetry and for favouring the interests of dominant groups rather than protecting the rights of the displaced (Rogers & Wilmsen, 2020). In practice, few negotiation interactions invite dialogue on livelihoods and wellbeing, nor do they create opportunities for addressing asymmetries in information or in access and power between the negotiating parties (Price & Tagliarino, 2019).

International agreements (notably UNDRIP) and international standards acknowledge the specific rights Indigenous peoples have over land and natural resources. To respect these rights, there are requirements related to engaging with Indigenous peoples, and granting greater decision-making authority (specifically FPIC) to representatives of these communities (Hanna & Vanclay, 2013). Secure access to lands, territories and natural resources, or secure livelihoods, is fundamental to Indigenous peoples' rights, as recognised by ILO Convention 169 (ILO, 1989), the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity, the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Sustainable Development Goals, which incorporates secure land, resources and livelihoods. A fundamental aspect of FPIC is that companies and project-sponsors must respect communities' decision 'to say no' to a project, activity or any key decision that could affect their land or livelihood (Oxfam, 2019).

Affected people have different needs, capabilities and aspirations. Having different options empowers affected people, as they can select the most appropriate livelihood strategy for themselves. However, resettlement can create new forms of poverty, especially if livelihood programmes are implemented as top-down approaches, without appropriate consultation with affected individuals, households and communities. Livelihood negotiation should cover many more aspects than just the monetary values for loss of assets and monetary compensation. While studies tend to focus on the effects of compensation methods, less attention is given to addressing the transformations induced by post-resettlement recovery, e.g. from peasantry to a cash-driven economy (Laungaramsri & Sengchanh, 2019).

Alternative livelihoods are often recommended by practitioners as a solution to losses, to increase income, and to improve local community wellbeing. However, many cases have shown that restoration measures designed to encourage affected people to switch to alternative livelihoods often do not match affected people's skills and aspirations. For example, a study of small-scale fishing households in the Tam Giang Lagoon in Vietnam concluded that most households found it unthinkable to engage in an alternative livelihood. The study demonstrated the need for an analytical framework considering education, labour skills and job availability, but also generational differences in capacity, preferences and aspirations (Hanh & Boonstra, 2019; Hanh, 2021).

Key Action 5: Compensate for Intangible Losses through Livelihoods Support

While conventional compensation approaches focus on loss of tangible resources and assets, other invisible losses incurred by economically displaced persons can also be highly signif-

icant. These invisible losses include the intangible benefits local communities derive from livelihood resources, such as decision-making authority linked to land ownership, identity, a sense of security, and a person's position within social networks and hierarchies (Witter & Satterfield, 2014). Invisible losses can be addressed through the design of livelihood restoration programmes that complement compensation for assets. There is consensus that monetary compensation alone is not sufficient to prevent impoverishment after displacement (Cernea, 1997; Vanclay, 2017). Compensation for lost tangible assets at replacement cost is a critical part of the overall strategy to rebuild livelihoods, but additional support is required if livelihoods are severely affected (Price, 2017).

As it has perceived immediate and concrete benefits, cash tends to be the preferred compensation method by eligible displaced persons. It is also often preferred by project sponsors and national authorities, as it is logistically easier and requires a short, defined time to implement (Rowan, 2017). However, many case studies have shown that relying on cash compensation as a livelihood restoration strategy can have negative unintended consequences, such as internal community conflicts, gender-based violence, and impoverishment, especially of women (Cernea, 2008; Perera, 2014; Connell, 2015). Lessons learnt about compensation and its limits have led to a 'development approach' to resettlement and livelihood restoration being advocated (Perera, 2014; Neef & Singer, 2015; Price, 2015).

Key Action 6: Deal with the Risks of Exclusion and Power

Marginalisation and social disarticulation are amongst the impoverishment risks of resettlement (Cernea, 1997). International standards include specific requirements to protect vulnerable affected people, such as female heads of household with few resources and no access to the decision-making process in the community, Indigenous people with lack of information, those with disabilities, and ethnic minorities with rights at risk. Vulnerability, exclusion and power imbalance at the local level have a significant impact on livelihood restoration outcomes (Kabra, 2018).

Vulnerability, exclusion and power relations merit deeper analysis than what is usually done when designing livelihood restoration (Kabra, 2018; Wilson, 2019). People's rights to livelihood restoration measures are frequently framed into eligibility and entitlement matrices as part of livelihood restoration plans. The rationale behind these eligibility and entitlement decisions is often questionable, and the 'non-entitled' often feel unfairly excluded (Lillywhite et al., 2015). Exclusion is often an inevitable risk in resettlement. A case study of a village livelihood development grants programme in Laos showed how power relations can be exercised through direct/visible and indirect/hidden ways, and significantly influence the ability of individual members of the community to benefit from livelihood restoration measures (Ramcilovic-Suominen & Kotilainen, 2020).

Host communities who have to share their resources with displaced communities also experience economic displacement (Kabra & Mahalwal, 2014; Cernea & Maldonado, 2018). In addition, the successful integration of displaced people depends on the acceptance of the host community. Interrelationships between the host population and displaced people are based on a power differential between the two groups. Many factors influence acceptance/rejection between host and displaced communities, including: segregation and labelling; financial and social burden; differences in land-use patterns; inadequate resources to share; conflict over common property resources; increased competition for jobs; the perception of

displaced people as a security threat; and over-burdening of the essential public services due to the population increase (Vanclay, 2017; Sridarran et al., 2018).

The HRBA offers a robust framework for examining power relations and factors of social exclusion that can undermine the outcomes of livelihood restoration, particularly by enabling a better understanding of the roles of the different stakeholders as rights-holders or duty-bearers (Foresti & Ludi, 2007). Power relations may be shaped by formal and informal codes and mechanisms associated with specific structures of local authorities (such as elders or customary leaders), which may deny rights to some groups (e.g. inheritance or land property for women), with direct and indirect consequences on livelihoods. Integrating a human rights analysis into livelihood impact assessment by focusing on specific human rights and on individuals contributes to addressing some of the livelihood restoration challenges identified above.

Key Action 7: Deal with Psychological and Emotional Factors

Livelihoods are connected to people's right to health. However, most standards are weak on requiring companies to consider, anticipate and manage the psychosocial dimensions and mental health conditions of affected people or host communities. Few studies investigate and document the distress that people can experience, including: anxiety, sadness, grief, hopelessness, fatigue, anger, loss of place attachment and sense of place, etc. (van der Ploeg & Vanclay, 2017, see Chapter 18).

Loss of livelihoods includes non-economic losses or 'invisible losses' (Witter & Satterfield, 2014) that deserve careful attention beyond the analysis of poverty data or impoverishment risks (Perera, 2014; van der Ploeg & Vanclay, 2017). Downing and Garcia-Downing (2009) described the effect of the transition from a 'routine culture' to a 'dissonant culture' of psycho-social-cultural disruption shortly after resettlement, and the eventual establishment of a new routine culture. Switching to alternative livelihoods can have serious emotional consequences, hence the need to adopt people-centred approaches in livelihood restoration (Esteves, 2021).

The right to a standard of living adequate for health and wellbeing is stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Art. 25). As defined by the World Health Organization, 'Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity' (WHO, 1946, p. 1). Also, 'Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community' (WHO, 2022, online).

Key Action 8: Ensure Appropriate Timing, Resources and Competencies

For livelihood programmes to be successful, projects must commit skills, resources and time, provide ongoing assistance and careful monitoring for an extended period of time, and have flexibility built into programme design to adapt to changing household conditions and changes in the external environment (Esteves, 2021). While many studies of project-induced displacement find that inadequate investments and programming result in livelihood degradation, examples illustrate how adequately funded and implemented programmes can lead to successful livelihood outcomes (Johnson & Krishnamurthy, 2010). Multilateral institutions

such as the World Bank recognise that livelihood restoration involves a series of steps over time and may take many years for the desired outcomes to be achieved, long after the project has closed (Rowan, 2017). Livelihood support is often only provided for two or three years, whereas a ten-year timeframe would be more realistic (Smyth et al., 2015; Rowan, 2017). With an HRBA lens, allocating appropriate resources for livelihood restoration falls under the duties of project owners and those in charge of designing and implementing the plans and measures. It is also the duty of lenders to set the conditions, in their standards and guidelines, for appropriate programming.

Key Action 9: Measure and Learn from Results, Going Beyond Economic Indicators

International standards require projects to conduct monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Due to the long-term consequences of livelihood impacts and the dynamic nature of vulnerability, M&E should be continued for as long as possible, as appropriate for each project (Reddy et al., 2015). Despite consensus that income and/or economic activities are inadequate determinants of livelihood restoration, they remain the dominant indicators used in livelihood restoration programmes. For example, it is common for indicators such as ‘a certain percentage of affected persons have had their income level fully recovered or increased’ to be used. Income and economic indicators have inherent limitations, such as a high dependence on self-reporting, deliberate misrepresentation, simplification of livelihoods, influenced by seasonal fluctuations, error in the measurement of expenditure and income, and exclusion of non-quantifiable indicators. Non-income indicators such as equity, empowerment, social capital, health, human rights and psychological wellbeing are necessary to complement the economic view of livelihoods (Downing & Garcia-Downing, 2009).

M&E also provides an opportunity to ensure programming contributes to the enjoyment of a range of human rights (Esteves et al., 2017; Gulakov et al., 2020; van der Ploeg & Vanclay, 2017). The HRBA requires household-level or individual-level monitoring (Foresti & Ludi, 2007). Relevant indicators include process indicators related to accountability, participation and non-discrimination; and outcome indicators based, for example, on the right to work or the right to a standard of living adequate for health and wellbeing (including adequate food).

CONCLUSION

Social impact assessment has an important role to play in ensuring development projects fulfil each of the nine key actions we have asserted as being essential for projects, so that they conform with international standards and demonstrate their respect for human rights:

1. Design the project to avoid displacement as much as possible
2. Assess livelihood impacts and risks
3. Unpack vulnerability
4. Ensure affected people can negotiate livelihoods restoration support
5. Compensate for intangible losses through livelihood restoration support
6. Deal with exclusion and power
7. Deal with psychological and emotional factors
8. Ensure appropriate timing, resources and competencies
9. Measure and learn from results, going beyond economic indicators.

Conventional ESIA timeframes, however, are generally insufficient for identifying and assessing livelihood impacts. This calls for supplementary studies that assess livelihood impacts in a comprehensive manner, beyond the conventional focus on income and employment, to include tangible impacts (e.g. loss of farming land, forest and fish resources, disruption of business activities, and change in agropastoral practices) and intangible impacts (e.g. inequalities, gender-based violence, place attachment, mental health, and stress relating to uncertainty or change).

Participatory analysis with both displaced and host communities assists in understanding the complex, interconnected consequences of livelihood loss, which may include reduced access to food, disruption of social structures, and negative impacts on physical and mental health (e.g. heightened anxiety, increased domestic violence, loss of access to education, compromised security, and housing and infrastructure challenges). Specific social and economic expertise (e.g. in fisheries, farming or business) should be integrated with local knowledge to ensure a thorough understanding of the local context, livelihood dependencies, and interdependencies. Practitioners have a range of tools at their disposal to collect data at the community, household or individual level, for example: key stakeholder interviews, household surveys, storytelling, scoring matrices, income and expenditure interviews, market visits, financial records analysis, observation, community profiles, multidisciplinary landscape assessment, most significant change methods, focus group discussions, and technology-based GIS tools.

It is also essential to integrate human rights into assessments of impacts on livelihoods. Income loss may affect aspects such as children's right to education or the right to a standard of living adequate for health and wellbeing. In practical terms, this involves: conducting meaningful engagement with affected persons and communities; considering the significance of the impact from their perspective; using disaggregated data; including human rights expertise within the assessment teams as early as possible; and applying core human rights principles, such as participation, empowerment, equality, non-discrimination and accountability, to the impact assessment process. Context-specific vulnerability assessments help identify and target the needs of differentially affected groups, including those experiencing greatest vulnerability or marginalisation in communities.

Finally, assessments should consider climate projections and risks in order to better understand potential effects on livelihood security, food security, water security, ecosystems services and income-generation opportunities. This can inform climate-resilient livelihood restoration strategies that take into account the potential impacts of climate change on agricultural productivity, access to water and habitat degradation, and for example, promotion of climate-smart agricultural practices, water management techniques and alternative income generation activities.

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25. Integrating cultural heritage into social impact assessment

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INTRODUCTION

Since its inception over a half-century ago and the drafting of related laws and regulations, impact assessment has included the topic of cultural heritage as one of its components. Historic and cultural heritage preservation, in fact, has its roots in national patrimony laws that predate almost all other aspects of environmental and social protection. And yet, cultural heritage as a discipline has struggled to find its place within the constellation of impact assessment practices. As a consequence, impact assessment studies often fail to address cultural heritage effectively, putting projects at risk and failing the communities and stakeholders that have interests in heritage. One challenge that cultural heritage practice faces comes from a failure to effectively integrate the cultural heritage and social components of impact assessment practices.

The seeming homelessness of cultural heritage practice in impact assessment is most striking when we consider the scope of Social Impact Assessment (SIA) and the demonstrable overlap of interests between cultural heritage and SIA. That overlap reflects the origins of many cultural heritage and SIA practitioners in the social sciences, our common focus on humanity in different communities, our mutual interests in empirical (qualitative and quantitative) data, and a common recognition of the multi-focal nature of our research. Building a more integrated relationship between the cultural heritage and social components of impact assessment is called for, especially as we increasingly understand the complexity of social and heritage resources and their significance to diverse communities.

Many practitioners in the cultural heritage area of impact assessment see our practice and SIA as natural allies. Therefore, this chapter reviews some of the disconnects between the cultural heritage and social components of impact assessment and proposes steps to overcome these issues to achieve greater integration of the two practices. The chapter also provides some comments for SIA and other impact assessment practitioners on current problems related to impact assessment as it applies to cultural heritage. These problems are not insignificant. Failure to address cultural heritage effectively during the completion of impact assessments can be very costly, from material and reputational standpoints. Choosing to minimize the cultural heritage component of an impact assessment can have significant long-term consequences for projects and communities.

WHAT IS THE CULTURAL HERITAGE COMPONENT OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT?

Despite its presence at the birth of impact assessment, cultural heritage has struggled to find a clear place at the table, especially vis-à-vis the practices of environmental impact assessment and SIA. This lack of fit likely derives, at least in part, from two factors. First, the presence of pre-existing national antiquity and patrimony laws in many countries has complicated how impact assessment incorporates consideration of cultural heritage. In the United States of America, for example, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which established environmental impact assessment, was preceded by the Antiquities Act of 1906, the Historic Sites Act of 1935, and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. There are numerous regulations and standards that apply to these preservation laws. The integration of NEPA and federal preservation laws in the USA is complicated, leading to extensive federal guidance on how to do so (e.g., CEQ & ACHP, 2013). The second factor is that cultural heritage management has its feet in two worlds: the antiquarian and the social/anthropological. As Meskell (2018) has characterized, there is a long-standing schism within the interrelated fields of historic preservation, archaeology, and anthropology. The schism derives from conflicting agendas, and paradigms with their roots in the humanities as opposed to the social sciences.

A consequence of this schism is that there are inconsistent perspectives on what cultural heritage is, especially as a component of impact assessment. Is it about protecting recognized, nationally significant monuments? Is it about the lesser-known heritage (archaeological and vernacular), which is often ignored in scoping, yet may be subject to a host of project impacts? Or is it about people and their relationships to each other through space, material culture, memory, and items that have intangible significance? This conflict often plays out in the different perspectives brought by national heritage authorities, with experiences focused on their particular heritage resources, and by international heritage specialists, who bring a set of assessment and management tools, but often lack local context and understanding. No wonder that other impact assessment practices have struggled to understand how to fit cultural heritage specialists into their work, especially when cultural heritage practitioners do not start from a singular framework.

As an introduction to what the cultural heritage component of impact assessment tends to cover in common practice, let us look at the definition from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) Performance Standard 8 (Cultural Heritage) (PS8):

For the purposes of this Performance Standard, cultural heritage refers to (i) tangible forms of cultural heritage, such as tangible moveable or immovable objects, property, sites, structures, or groups of structures, having archaeological (prehistoric), paleontological, historical, cultural, artistic, and religious values; (ii) unique natural features or tangible objects that embody cultural values, such as sacred groves, rocks, lakes, and waterfalls; and (iii) certain instances of intangible forms of culture that are proposed to be used for commercial purposes, such as cultural knowledge, innovations, and practices of communities embodying traditional lifestyles. (IFC, 2012a, p. 1)

This definition, along with a close read of PS8 and the accompanying guidance notes (IFC, 2012a), provides some key details. Essentially, cultural heritage is, or can be: overwhelmingly tangible, but not all of the time; movable or immovable; buildings, structures, and sites; intact or in ruins; isolated or clustered; spiritual or temporal; built by humans or natural features of importance to people; and artistic or a product of vernacular activities. The conventional

understanding of ‘heritage’ is as some thing or things, or a place or places, that are worthy of protection that should be preserved for future generations (Bevan, 2016). At the same time, these definitions, and the common practice among impact practitioners that follows from these definitions, regularly place less emphasis on intangible heritage, cultural practices, and the aspects of behavior among living communities that recognize and utilize their knowledge and heritage sites.

Through its adoption by multinational lenders and the Equator Banks, PS8 has become the good practice framework of choice for the cultural heritage component of impact assessment. Nevertheless, there are notable gaps in the standard that are known to cultural heritage practitioners and should be more widely appreciated. Many of these gaps result from the fact that PS8 was drafted over a decade ago, and good practice has advanced in the intervening time. These gaps in PS8 include:

- There is relatively weak acknowledgment, and lack of articulation, of the concept of ‘living heritage’, i.e. the tangible cultural heritage sites that can have intangible significance or other forms of significance of value to living communities, Indigenous and otherwise. For heritage sites to be acknowledged as ‘living heritage’ in PS8, they need to be currently used by affected communities, or have been ‘used’ in living memory for ‘long-standing’ cultural purposes. In other words, the sites need to have been directly associated with traditional cultural practices.
- There is a shunting of responsibility for cultural heritage associated with Indigenous peoples to Performance Standard 7 (PS7) (Indigenous Peoples) (IFC, 2012b). PS7, however, only provides explicit direction on the management of heritage classified as ‘critical cultural heritage’ to Indigenous peoples. In PS7, critical cultural heritage is defined as ‘heritage that is essential to the identity and/or cultural, ceremonial, or spiritual aspects of Indigenous Peoples lives’ (IFC, 2012b, p. 1). Any project creating environmental or social impacts that would affect the critical cultural heritage of Indigenous peoples would require the free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) of the affected communities before proceeding. Unfortunately, while commendable as a concept, this standard is rarely followed. PS7 directs readers back to PS8 for all other impacts on cultural heritage that relate to Indigenous peoples. PS8, as currently written, does not acknowledge any responsibility for impacts on cultural heritage related to Indigenous peoples that would not be classified as critical (IFC, 2012b).
- There is excessive focus on critical cultural heritage that is known, already protected, generally monumental, and often of more importance to academics, national heritage authorities, and external experts than to heritage that might be of concern to local project-affected people. For communities that are not Indigenous, using the definitions in PS8, most impacts on heritage are classified as not critical, and consequently are easily overlooked or ignored.
- There is a deference to national schemes for heritage protection, even when those schemes are not effectively integrated into impact assessment requirements. The outcome of this is that heritage issues are ignored.
- There is an over-reliance on ‘Chance Find Procedures’ as the tool for managing cultural heritage impacts and, at the same time, the last line of defense for heritage protection. In practice, the presence or absence of a Chance Find Procedure in a project proponent’s

project documents is often the only key performance indicator (KPI) used to evaluate whether the project complies with PS8.

Recent practice in the cultural heritage field and the more recent performance standards of other international financial institutions, notably the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB, 2020), have attempted to address some of these issues. A key addition is a separate standard for stakeholder engagement and information disclosure. Effective community engagement is essential for cultural heritage scoping in order to understand local communities' concerns regarding impacts on their cultural heritage, and in fact what they consider to be heritage.

SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

I reviewed a sample of the SIA literature from the past ten years to consider how cultural heritage was perceived and integrated into the thoughts and concerns of SIA practitioners. I found that cultural heritage appears to be on the periphery of the discussions of methods and topics of relevance. In this section, I review a few examples to illustrate where cultural heritage currently fits into SIA practice. In the next section, I discuss how to integrate the two practices more effectively.

In their 'Social impact assessment: The state of the art' from a decade ago, Esteves et al. (2012) provide a solid discussion of developing topics, such as FPIC, human rights, social performance standards, and the need for best practice. Each of these topics is also central to cultural heritage practice. And yet, Esteves et al. made minimal reference to cultural heritage, other than to comment on the lack of integration of analysis to incorporate cultural heritage, and to acknowledge that: 'typically practised SIA does not adequately address human rights, and explicit attention should be given to due diligence when it comes to issues such as forced evictions, community access to cultural heritage and human trafficking' (Esteves et al., 2012, p. 38).

João et al. (2011) discussed the importance of emphasizing enhancement in impact assessment and recommended that an 'enhancement hierarchy' be used in parallel with the more traditional mitigation hierarchy. The concept is commendable and is especially relevant in project settings where national or local authorities or other stakeholders need capacity building to address a lack of knowledge or lack the technical infrastructure to manage the impacts of a major extractive project (Polglase, 2018). Yet, in illustrating how enhancement complements mitigation, João et al. (2011) place cultural heritage as a benefit to local communities in social and health's outer 'enhancement' ring. As I discuss below, the protection of cultural heritage, especially heritage of importance to local communities and project-affected people, should be keyed into the mitigation hierarchy in parallel with other critical impacts.

In an article that explored project-induced displacement and resettlement, van der Ploeg and Vanclay (2017) emphasize the use of a human rights-based approach. They effectively place displacement and involuntary resettlement as an assault on human rights that should be avoided. Their consideration of Indigenous peoples and rights lays the groundwork for a consideration of the critical role of living heritage:

the right to self-determination, which allows Indigenous peoples to choose their own development path, can be adversely impacted by land acquisition that requires Indigenous peoples to move away

from their traditional lands and homes, which in turn affects their livelihoods, personal and spiritual attachments. (van der Ploeg & Vanclay, 2017, p. 35)

In their article, van der Ploeg and Vanclay present primary human rights principles and procedures that should be applied in resettlement processes and decision-making. Several of these also resonate when we think about the relationship of communities to cultural heritage (van der Ploeg & Vanclay, 2017, pp. 40–46):

- The resettlement process should respect and fulfill the right of impacted people to participate in decision-making consistent with the principle of equality and non-discrimination and must provide adequate attention to the needs of vulnerable groups.
- The resettlement process should respect and fulfill the right to remedy through an operational grievance mechanism, with an appropriately adapted process for vulnerable groups.
- The whole resettlement process must be governed by transparency and accountability.
- Resettlement should result in continuing access to places of cultural or spiritual significance and the commitment to preserve intangible and tangible cultural heritage to respect the right to culture and the right to religion.

Van der Ploeg and Vanclay (2017) correctly emphasize the unique circumstances and challenges posed by cultural heritage of significance to displaced communities. In this respect, one of the human rights principles they identify, adequate compensation for loss of assets, is difficult to achieve regarding cultural heritage. They correctly emphasize the place-focused significance of much tangible and intangible heritage. They also emphasize that IFC Performance Standard 5 (Land Acquisition and Involuntary Resettlement) is mute on the subject of how ‘cultural losses could or should be addressed’ (van der Ploeg & Vanclay, 2017, p. 47). This topic is clearly a recognized overlapping risk and challenge among SIA and cultural heritage practitioners.

Smyth and Vanclay (2017) proposed a Social Framework for Projects to assist in assessing, planning, and managing the social impacts of projects. The article presented a thoughtful framework for organizing the impact assessment process around the concept of people’s well-being. They identified eight categories, one of which is ‘culture’, as triggers for understanding community needs (Smyth & Vanclay, 2017). This incorporation of culture and heritage in their proposed framework represents good practice, one that would be reinforced through the incorporation of a cultural heritage practitioner in scoping and in the planning of stakeholder engagement.

In a recent SIA state of the art article, Vanclay (2020) reviewed some current trends and important themes in SIA practice. His points that resonate in regard to cultural heritage include:

- There is a shift in SIA from being a regulatory tool to primarily being a management tool for project proponents.
- Social issues can be seen as business risks.
- The increasing role of social license to operate (SLO) as a measure of community acceptance of a project, or project proponent.
- The extent to which risk management and SLO have become incorporated into Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) as a way to assess corporate behavior.
- The need to effectively integrate human-related measures of project impact into projects driven by the United Nation’s Sustainability Development Goals.

- The critical role of FPIC to Indigenous peoples and how, as project-affected peoples, they need to lead their own assessments of social and cultural impacts.
- The existential importance of place and how forced resettlement impacts communities in diverse ways.

On the final point, Vanclay emphasizes the impacts of resettlement on a community's connections to tangible and intangible heritage. Such impacts are exceedingly difficult to incorporate into the mitigation hierarchy; as he notes: 'Other complexities include the relocation of graves, cemeteries and shrines, especially in societies where this would be anathema, or where discussion of death and the departed is taboo. In societies that vest spiritual significance in objects (e.g., trees, rocks), relocation of those objects may be required where this is possible. More complex is resettling spirits that are not embedded within objects' (Vanclay, 2020, p. 128).

This review of recent discussions related to SIA suggests a trend towards increasing consideration around the topic of cultural heritage, especially related to the topics of resettlement and the rights of Indigenous peoples. However, there still seems to be siloing among social and cultural practice areas that impacts SIA and cultural heritage. This siloing is also apparent in a review article on the status of Cultural Impact Assessment (CIA) (Partal & Dunphy, 2016). In their article, Partal and Dunphy discuss the relationship between CIA, SIA, and cultural heritage as a component of impact assessment. The key issue that emerged from their article is that CIA practitioners are not aligned with SIA practitioners, and that they do not see cultural heritage practitioners as working regularly beyond the tangible and archaeological (Partal & Dunphy, 2016).

GENERAL COMMENTS ON CULTURAL HERITAGE PRACTICE IN IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The need to include cultural heritage as a facet of ESG is becoming increasingly clear. A very prominent example is Rio Tinto's destruction of the Juukan Gorge Caves in the Pilbara Region of Western Australia. This act and the consequences of the company's behavior do not need to be elaborated here as they have been expounded in many places (e.g. Wensing, 2020; Kemp et al., 2023). However, at least after a national inquiry, much public outcry, shareholder rebellion, and some large fines, Rio Tinto has publicly recognized its mistakes and has dedicated an entire page on its website to the topic (Rio Tinto, 2022). It is important to understand that this act of desecration is not an isolated case. There is a growing list of projects around the world where the heritage interests of local people have been impacted by projects, and where heritage has impacted projects. Examples from the USA, for instance, include the Dakota Access Pipeline, the Resolution Copper Mine, and the Atlantic Coast Pipeline. The Atlantic Coast Pipeline project was canceled partly because of the challenges and lawsuits from a number of communities over project impacts that were not adequately addressed during project planning. There are many comparable examples of infrastructure and extraction projects all around the world being stopped because of their impacts on local heritage and local people. One example is a planned lithium mine near Cáceres in Extremadura, an autonomous community of Spain, which was delayed because of its likely impacts on the cultural heritage values of the region.

It is rare for all cultural heritage sites that might be within a project's area of influence to be known (especially to outsiders) or officially registered at the time of the scoping or baseline

surveys. Other than large and notable monuments, identifying cultural heritage that might be impacted by a project is not like referencing endangered (Red List) species – archaeological sites and vernacular architecture are not normally found without an intensive baseline survey completed by a team of experienced practitioners. Consequently, assessing the scale of cultural heritage impacts often can be very difficult early in the lifecycle of a project, and a project team needs to be prepared to re-evaluate the scope of cultural heritage baseline surveys, depending on what is learned during stakeholder engagement and initial survey efforts.

As with other aspects of human behavior and people-related activities, cultural heritage resources are complex and multi-focal. Cultural heritage can have spiritual meanings or have financial value, be part of an ecosystem service, be significant to international researchers, or can be unknown and of little consequence. How a resource is addressed during an impact assessment will be based on guidance received from stakeholders, from national heritage authorities, and by applying impact assessment methodologies, which may vary significantly between cultural heritage practitioners.

One reason behind the differing impact assessment methodologies applied by cultural heritage practitioners is the confusing and often contradictory guidance available to them (Patiwael et al., 2019; Ashrafi et al., 2022). Heritage laws at the national level vary significantly from country to country. Some countries provide age thresholds to define what can be considered as a heritage site or monument. Some countries exclude cemeteries from the category of heritage. Other countries treat all archaeological sites as national patrimony and have built local cottage industries around the recovery of every artifact that might be displaced by a project. Guidance from lenders can also be contradictory or confusing. When lender standards are layered over national heritage law and its requirements, each impact assessment becomes a new exercise in finding appropriate methodologies for scoping, survey, and assessment.

One example of this complexity can be seen by how World Heritage sites are addressed in impact assessment (Patiwael et al., 2020). World Heritage sites are, by any measure, critical cultural heritage (as defined in PS8). Yet, the methods by which they are incorporated into an impact assessment have been poorly defined. This problem was exacerbated because ICOMOS (the International Council on Monuments and Sites), one of the Advisory Bodies of the World Heritage Committee, released a guidance document on World Heritage and impact assessment in 2011 that outlined how to prepare a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) (ICOMOS, 2011). This HIA guidance used terminology, applied methods, and generated output that did not align with standard international impact assessment practice. In 2022, the ICOMOS guidance was updated to better address World Heritage in its multiple layers of significance and complexity, and now offers tools that better align with other practice areas (UNESCO, 2022).

Another relatively peculiar aspect of cultural heritage studies in much of the world is that there are apparent conflicts of interest between the national heritage regulators and the entities that are required to conduct heritage surveys and archaeological excavations. In some places, the archaeologists who determine what work needs to be completed are the same archaeologists that, by law, have to do the archaeological recovery work. Such was the case for the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) in Greece, where the Ephorates (local representatives of the Ministry of Culture and the proximate local regulators) were responsible for managing day-to-day archaeological excavations (Skartsis, 2021). In Azerbaijan, the representatives of the Institute for Archaeology and Ethnography defined the scope of archaeological excavations and then managed those excavations (Polglase, 2018). These seeming conflicts of

interest can have extraordinary financial impacts on a project, especially during a project's construction phase.

This leads to another crucial point: cultural heritage studies can be expensive, and in some instances, they can be very expensive. When executed thoroughly, the costs of baseline surveys can be high, as the activities are labor intensive. But the investment in a comprehensive baseline survey can reduce the financial impacts of cultural heritage sites being discovered during a project's construction phase. In the case of the TAP project in Greece, the project received an EU grant of over 14 million Euros to pay for archaeological excavations. The cost of the project's archaeological excavations and the need for a grant on this scale might not have been needed if a more fit-for-purpose baseline survey had been completed in advance of the project's construction phase. A more thorough baseline survey would have allowed for the avoidance of more archaeological sites during project planning and design. Such was also the case for the Baku—Tbilisi—Ceyhan and South Caucasus pipelines constructed across Azerbaijan and Georgia from 2003 to 2005. Many archaeological sites were discovered during the project construction phase, necessitating construction work-arounds and salvage excavations and costing millions of dollars. The lessons learned from these projects have contributed to improved performance and reduced costs in later projects (Polglase, 2018). Essentially, it is well worthwhile to do proper assessments early on.

Finally, the presence or absence of a 'Chance Find Procedure' has often served as a default measure of whether a project's impact assessment documents meet IFC standards. However, this is an inadequate and flawed approach. Reliance on a Chance Find Procedure as the only way of managing heritage has been a significant contributor to project overruns and failed community relationships. Furthermore, nothing in the PS8 guidance implies that a Chance Find Procedure should play such a key role. PS8 is clear that baseline surveys should be designed and completed to meet the potential for impacts to cultural heritage after appropriate scoping and stakeholder engagement. Unfortunately, in many instances, scoping and stakeholder engagement related to cultural heritage is not completed by cultural heritage practitioners that understand PS8. Often the staff that complete this research know nothing about cultural heritage. The upshot of this is that statements are made that 'there is no known heritage in the area' or that 'the community is not interested in heritage', both of which are universally usually untrue. It is important to stress that a Chance Find Procedure should be the last of many actions by a project in managing cultural heritage. It should always be applied in conjunction with proper surveys and planning. The consequences of having to initiate a response following a chance find can be severe and dramatic, including: stop work declarations; extensive communication with national heritage authorities; cost increases by construction contractors; mobilization of archaeology teams for assessment and salvage excavations; the need for further stakeholder engagement; and lost confidence from internal and external observers (reputational risk).

CONCLUSION: NEXT STEPS FOR SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Why is the disconnect between SIA and cultural heritage practice important? The recent SIA literature I reviewed, especially Vanclay (2020), speaks eloquently about the risks of our times. Among these risks are the threats posed by climate change and related population dis-

placements. The social and cultural world has always been complex, and the threats to people are growing in severity and frequency. Those of us who work within impact assessment and bring diverse perspectives from the social sciences, humanities, and human geography need to coordinate our planning and activities more effectively to ensure better outcomes for communities and projects. To effectively support projects and communities, I offer the following suggestions:

1. Spend a greater amount of time planning and coordinating the activities of the various practitioners who work with local communities and address their interests.
2. Coordinate screening and scoping processes to include a representative of each major subject. Communication between the practitioners in such a setting is critical to ensuring that there is a line of sight on all critical subjects, and that gaps are minimized.
3. Incorporate a cultural heritage professional into stakeholder engagement planning with all affected communities. A cultural heritage professional will have a better sense of the questions that should be posed to identify areas of concern.
4. The project representatives who will participate in stakeholder engagement should be trained by a cultural heritage to look for living heritage of interest to local communities, such as possible sacred spaces, gender-defined activity areas, etc.
5. Best practice for stakeholder engagement calls for representative groups within a community to be approached where they are free to participate. Conversations with these groups should include questions pertinent to the identification of cultural heritage.
6. Coordinate baseline studies to include the needs of both the social and cultural heritage teams. SIA professionals are rarely trained to look at and recognize the range of heritage that may be of significance to different members of a community. Cultural heritage professionals have field survey skills that may be of use to the SIA team.
7. Toss aside the silos created by strict adherence to the IFC performance standards. Those standards, while well-meaning at the time, are now outdated and have been bypassed by practice. It is important for a specialist working with Indigenous peoples to go beyond IFC PS7 and think about IFC PS8. A resettlement specialist may need to incorporate perspectives from the Indigenous peoples and cultural heritage practice areas in assessing the potential impacts of a forced resettlement scheme.
8. Incorporate a consideration of cultural heritage into assessments of ecosystem services. The literature on the subject of such integration is relatively thin (Daniel et al., 2012; Hølleland et al., 2017). There is always a relationship between human activities and tangible and intangible heritage, and many of these activities directly relate to how communities utilize the landscape and the resources therein. Therefore, it is critical to incorporate an understanding of heritage management considerations into SIA.
9. Work to achieve project enhancements through coordination across practice areas. Capacity building and other enhancements are likely to be more valuable if they derive from a multi-focal assessment.

If we can better integrate the activities of social, cultural, heritage, and other professionals into impact assessment, there is a greater chance that we create better outcomes for impacted communities. The benefits of coordination and integration also include: enhanced baseline mapping and assessment of impacts; the potential for greater confidence in the project and the project team from affected communities; reduced risk during a project's construction, operation, and decommissioning phases; and enhanced partnerships with local communities.

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26. Managing influx: project-induced in-migration

Robert Gerrits

INTRODUCTION

The construction and operation of a project may catalyse a plethora of political, economic, social and cultural changes within the project's areas of influence and beyond. The specific nature and expression of such changes is determined by the project context and project characteristics, with the greatest change being observed with projects that may be characterised as transformational at a landscape level (e.g. large-scale oil, gas and mining projects). Such change may occur throughout the project cycle. For projects with protracted development periods, early project activities may be associated with sequential boom-and-bust cycles that contribute to ensuring a broad-based awareness and anticipation of prospective project development and changing behaviours, culminating in a maelstrom of accelerated change in project areas of influence during the project construction period.

Project-induced in-migration (PIIM) is a key driver of the accelerated change catalysed by project development. PIIM may commence early in the project development cycle, generally peaking during the construction period, although, depending on the context and the project, it may continue throughout the operations phase. PIIM is recognised to have the potential to create a wide range of positive and negative environmental and social impacts. These impacts are of relevance to local communities within the project's areas of influence and to the project itself.

Potential positive social impacts are associated with area development, with socio-economic change yielding benefits to local communities, as well as leading to the integration of the area into the mainstream economy. Key adverse social impacts are associated with: local participation and benefit capture by elites and those with more power; increased demand on services (health, education, water and sanitation); adverse social-cultural impacts; adverse land use and livelihood outcomes; and adverse impacts on community health, safety and security. PIIM thus has the potential to adversely impact upon, or even negate, the positive intentions of a project's social management plans. The short-term adverse social impacts can also affect the project's 'social licence to operate', often leading to deteriorating relations between the project and local communities. In the longer term – especially for projects that have the potential to be transformational at the landscape level – PIIM may influence the regional development trajectory and adversely impact on the operating context for the project.

The assessment of PIIM seeks to identify the likelihood, scale and physical expression of the in-migration that may be associated with the project, and the potential impacts and risks from this. In turn, the assessment leads to recommendations designed to pre-empt, minimise and manage both the in-migration phenomenon itself, its physical expression, and its key impacts and risks. It is critical to note that the purpose of a PIIM management strategy and plan is not to prevent in-migration, but to pro-actively manage its expression, to mitigate key adverse impacts, and to promote a positive area-wide development trajectory.

The insights presented in this chapter are primarily based on the author's first-hand experience in managing in-migration in various projects. Between 2002 and 2006, the author worked on the BP Tangguh Project in Papua, Indonesia, first as resettlement manager, and subsequently in the development of a regional Integrated Area Development Plan that included recognition and management of the risk and potential impacts of PIIM into the project's areas of influence. He joined the International Finance Corporation (IFC) in 2008 and was the lead author of the publication *Projects and People: A Handbook for Addressing Project-Induced In-Migration* (IFC, 2009), which still remains one of the key documents on this topic. As part of the process of developing that publication, several detailed case studies of the PIIM phenomenon were undertaken. This chapter is a distillation and further development of the IFC PIIM handbook. It also draws on the IFC case studies, recent project experience (including in Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia), and other published material (e.g. Bury, 2007; Bainton et al., 2017, 2018; Bebbington & Humphreys Bebbington, 2018).

WHAT IS PROJECT-INDUCED IN-MIGRATION?

The IFC (2009, p. v) defined project-induced in-migration as: 'the movement of people into an area in anticipation of, or in response to, economic opportunities associated with the development and/or operation of a new project.' This also includes the anticipated broader socio-economic development that may be catalysed by project development. Project construction and operations normally require the in-migration of workers. However, beyond employment, there is a wide range of project and area development-related economic opportunities that may draw people into a project area.

PIIM is synonymous with the term *influx* (meaning of people) and sometimes is more colourfully described as the 'honey-pot effect'. Also, Bainton and Banks (2018) described a process of 'rural-to-resource migration' in Melanesia, which is a typical process. It is important to emphasise that PIIM refers to the in-migration occurring in response to various project-related economic opportunities including: in-migration related to direct project opportunities (e.g. employment and the supply of goods and services); opportunities associated with the improved welfare and increasing disposable income of local people engaged by the project; and, more generally, the opportunities associated with the accelerated rate of economic growth and development of the area (e.g. infrastructure and services) that may be catalysed by the project.

High levels of rural unemployment (or under-employment) and poverty, together with the promise of employment by large-scale projects, can drive early and significant national and sometimes international migration towards a project, often before it has broken ground (i.e. in anticipation of the project). The multiplier effect of direct project employment is generally estimated to be in the order of 4 to 10 times, depending on context and project (IFC, 2009). In other words, every one person employed directly by the project (whether local or an in-migrant) leads to economic opportunities for an additional 4 to 10 people. Such growth, which is concentrated in the period immediately preceding and during construction, is reflected in PIIM-driven annual population growth rates, which frequently range from 10 to 15 per cent in project areas of influence (IFC, 2009).

UNDERSTANDING THE PROJECT-INDUCED IN-MIGRATION PHENOMENON

A basic understanding of the dynamics of PIIM is necessary to inform its effective assessment and management. At the outset, it is important to emphasise that Environmental and Social Impact Assessments tend to have a specific territorial focus and present relatively static (i.e. fixed in time) assessments. In contrast, PIIM and the evolving context have spatial and temporal dimensions that influence the occurrence and expression of PIIM, and thus should influence the assessment and management of a project's social impacts. The key questions to be considered include: (i) What is the predicted probability of PIIM? (ii) What is the likely spatial and temporal expression of PIIM in the project's area of influence? (iii) How might the accelerated change processes induced by project development and PIIM alter the development trajectory of the area? (iv) How might these processes be managed to promote development outcomes and mitigate adverse social impacts and risks?

In many locations, other projects (including different types of project) have already occurred prior to the current project development. These projects may also have been associated with PIIM, and may continue to be significant drivers of area development, economic opportunity and PIIM. Assessment of the probability and possible impacts of PIIM should start with an assessment of existing projects and their associated PIIM phenomena.

In assessing PIIM, it is important to understand the spatial and temporal nature of in-migration. In-migration occurs across a spatial–geographical continuum centred on the project's footprint and activities. As such, when considering the dynamics of PIIM and its impacts, one must consider the periphery (i.e. the major entry points), the staging posts, and the centre (i.e. hotspots) within the project's areas of influence. This runs counter to the tendency in Environmental Impact Assessments to focus only on the immediate project footprint and area of operations. Projects with multiple bases of activity present more-complex situations, with the potential to experience multiple nodes of in-migration for the geographically separated activities and more-complex local in-migration footprints.

In-migration is an ongoing temporal phenomenon strongly linked to the project development cycle. Typically, projects are only required to assess PIIM and develop a management strategy and plan for the construction phase of projects. However, for large-scale projects, it is important to note that early project activities (exploration, early development with different operational bases) may have already triggered sequential in-migration boom–bust cycles prior to project construction. Within the project construction period, the magnitude and rate of in-migration is strongly correlated with the ramping-up of construction activities and associated demand for labour and goods and services.

The probability, timing and duration of PIIM are determined by the nature of the project, ongoing development in the area, and the extent to which the area is integrated into the mainstream economy of the region and nation. For large-scale, long-life projects (e.g. extractive industries and manufacturing), PIIM may occur throughout the project lifecycle. Early project phases are often associated with short-term increases in project activity and a temporary economic boom that induces a tide of in-migration, only for this to ebb during 'idle' or 'slow-down' periods between sequential project phases.

The project construction phase generally represents the period of maximum project activity and economic opportunity. Accordingly, PIIM generally peaks during project construction with the entry of unskilled and semi-skilled people seeking temporary employment with the

project and entrepreneurs seeking to provide goods and services to the project. Also, there is likely to be a more general wave of in-migration of people and entrepreneurs seeking to capitalise on the improved welfare and disposable incomes of the local population employed by the project, as well as from the increased economic activity and accelerated development of the area. As the project progresses to operations, most wage-seeking in-migrants typically move on to new opportunities elsewhere. However, the demand for labour and goods and services of the ongoing operations phase, as well as the area's integration into the mainstream economy and ongoing development, may form the basis for continued economic growth and in-migration.

In-migrants can be classified on the basis of their point of origin, their reason for moving into the area, or by the means by which they claim rights to entry, residence and project benefits in the project's areas of influence (IFC, 2009; Bainton & Banks, 2018; Jackson, 2018). The promise of employment and/or opportunities to capitalise on increased levels of economic opportunity can be extremely attractive, especially for people who operate poverty-line subsistence livelihoods and/or experience high levels of unemployment or under-employment. Remittances from migrants are also an important component of rural livelihood strategies and make an important contribution to household welfare. Therefore, the perception of opportunity – as seen by in-migrants – is a key consideration that should inform project efforts to increase awareness and understanding of the different phases of the project and associated opportunities for employment and the provision of goods and services. In many countries, the potential opportunities that drive in-migration far outweigh the potential costs (transport, extended absence from families, housing, subsistence) and individual and household risk. Furthermore, there are often incentives for other key actors (including state actors) to promote the potential opportunities associated with a project. Accordingly, to guide and/or discourage in-migration, and to improve awareness and understanding of the project and its associated opportunities, appropriate messaging (e.g. information regarding project phases, employment opportunities and 'local first' employment policies) needs to start early and be continuous throughout the project.

The channels through which people become aware of new project developments and opportunities take shape early in the project development cycle, and generally well before the start of construction and any construction phase-related project engagement and communication. Therefore, engagement with government and general communications regarding the project (including project opportunities, employment, provision of goods and services, potential duration of employment) needs to be initiated very early in the project cycle to ensure that stakeholders can make informed decisions based on an understanding of the type and nature of the opportunities that might be present. Such engagement will help reduce unrealistic expectations of the project. Similarly, early engagement with local government and local communities to anticipate in-migration and develop and implement management strategies is critical.

It is important to appreciate the importance of customary forms of welcome and inclusion, as well as the kinship-based systems that are often the basis of entitlement to enter or reside within a locality (i.e. the project's areas of influence), and locally perceived eligibility to receive project benefits (including employment) (Bainton & Banks, 2018; Jackson, 2018). Accordingly, one should be wary of approaches that rely on local community leaders to manage in-migration and the distribution and protection of benefits that are intended to be preferentially allocated to the local impacted population. For projects seeking to prioritise local benefits, in-migration poses significant challenges to local households, communities

and the project, as traditional approaches to including newcomers can be challenged and overwhelmed, leading to: (i) disruption of leadership; (ii) strained social networks and inter-household and inter-community relations; and (iii) conflict arising from the distribution of project benefits, and dilution amongst a growing population.

Past experience demonstrates that a majority of in-migrants are relatively young, single men. Over time, and particularly as risk diminishes, other family members may also migrate. The prevalence of male in-migration – colourfully characterised as ‘mobile men with money’ – is associated with specific risks such as prostitution, sexual exploitation, and associated risks including sexually transmitted diseases, early pregnancy, and a breakdown of social mores and norms (Tserendorj et al., 2013).

The pathways for in-migration are largely determined by the project location and existing transportation networks. Journeys often involve multiple stops involving passage through larger urban centres prior to arrival in the project’s areas of influence. Establishing regional employment centres, working with local government, and ensuring adequate communications can be useful in managing the inflow of migrants into the project area. Means of transportation include air, land and marine transport, or a combination thereof depending on the context. Promoting sound communications on public transportation vehicles and at key stops is a useful strategy in promoting awareness and understanding of the type and nature of project-related opportunities, thereby potentially helping to manage inflow.

The project scale and footprint throughout the project lifecycle influence the entry and settlement patterns of in-migrants. Progression from project entry, early exploration, early works and project construction may be associated with different locations, footprints and scale of project operations. For example, project construction of linear projects with multiple operational bases that may relocate during the life of the project clearly differs from large-scale industrial projects located on a single expansive site. Urban and peri-urban projects benefit from the greater assimilative capacity of these locations and therefore experience a very different in-migration phenomenon.

The patterns of in-migrant entry and settlement are generally predictable across project contexts and types of projects. Key places of interest include some combination of: (i) regional cities and towns; (ii) access routes; (iii) small towns in the broader project’s areas of influence and close to the project base; (iv) villages in the immediate project area close to the project base (i.e. fence-line communities); and (v) newly formed, informal fence-line settlements. Within the project’s areas of influence, it is possible to identify in-migration hotspots where newly arriving in-migrants are likely to concentrate and settle. The identification of in-migration hotspots is a key output of a PIIM assessment, and helps target management interventions.

Key determinants of migrant entry and settlement include: (i) the reasons that encourage migrants to relocate and settle within the project’s areas of influence; (ii) project characteristics; (iii) the pathways by which in-migrants arrive at the project’s areas of influence (i.e. arrival at nearest town’s bus-stop or port); (iv) the individual purpose for in-migration (i.e. employment as unskilled or semi-skilled labour or establishment of enterprises providing goods and services for population and/or project); and (v) the need to access infrastructure, services and utilities. Typically, most in-migration involves people seeking employment as unskilled and semi-skilled labour. It is commonly believed that proximity to the project (e.g. presence at the front gate or being in a fence-line settlement) maximises opportunities for employment, with this belief usually being affirmed by a project’s preferential allocation of employment opportunities to local people. Consequently, a project’s intention to prioritise

local employment may stimulate PIIM depending on the company and community approach to distribution and allocation of employment opportunities.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH PROJECT-INDUCED IN-MIGRATION

PIIM can be associated with diverse positive and negative environmental and social impacts and risks across multiple sectors. Traditional approaches to impact management focus on avoiding, minimising or mitigating *adverse* impacts, implicitly assuming that *positive* impacts will develop without support. This assumption is fallacious – in marginalised, under-developed areas characterised by limited capacity, resources and infrastructure, pro-active interventions are required to help enable and steer positive development trajectories.

Adverse environmental impacts are associated with the in-migrants' scramble for land and resources, which may lead to landscape-level change, including: increased deforestation associated with harvesting timber, production of firewood and charcoal, and subsistence agriculture or market gardening; brick-making activities; harvesting sand for local construction; increased demand and potential depletion of wildlife, timber, non-timber forest products and water sources; contamination of water sources; and urban expansion, especially through the growth of unplanned informal settlements. Certain aspects of biodiversity and ecosystem services (regulating, provisioning, cultural and supporting) have important environmental and social aspects. The utilisation of natural resources by in-migrants can have deleterious impacts on ecosystem services and may lead to a disruption of ecosystem functioning and to the benefits local people derive from them.

The adverse social impacts are primarily associated with accelerated change processes that often exceed the assimilative and/or adaptive capacities of the local government, communities, households and existing local infrastructure, services and utilities. The main adverse social impacts include: threats to local participation and project benefits; adverse social-cultural impacts; increased pressure on land and food sources; adverse livelihood outcomes; adverse community health, safety and security outcomes; and increased demand on services (e.g. health, education).

The IFC (2009) document *Projects and People: A Handbook for Addressing Project-Induced In-Migration*, provided a detailed description of the positive and negative environmental and social impacts associated with PIIM. The following lists (adapted from the handbook and used with permission) outline the potential adverse social impacts related to: infrastructure, services and utilities; economics and livelihood strategies; community health, safety and security; and social dynamics. Adverse impacts on infrastructure, services and utilities include:

- Increased use of existing roads and transportation systems
- Increased pressure on education and health services
- Increased pressure on waste management systems
- Increased demand for electricity, water supplies and sanitation
- Unplanned and uncontrolled development of squatter settlements
- Increased demand on communications networks
- Increased demand for housing
- Increased use of/demand for community, religious and recreational facilities.

Adverse impacts on the local economy and livelihood strategies include:

- Increased poverty
- Increased cost of living (inflation)
- Competition for economic resources and employment, e.g. loss of productive land to urban and squatter settlement
- Reduced availability and increased cost of land, food, fuel and housing
- Reduced reliance on local subsistence production systems
- Increased dependence on broader cash-based economy to meet needs
- Increased economic vulnerability for marginal groups (women, elderly, minorities, etc.)
- Boom–bust cycles associated with initial construction, eventual closure.

Adverse impacts on health include:

- Increased incidence of accidents and fatalities associated with project traffic
- Increased pollution (air, water, dust, noise, traffic)
- Proliferation of communicable diseases (including sexually transmitted infections, respiratory infections, waterborne diseases)
- Insufficient number of health centres, staff and medical supplies
- Inadequate public hygiene facilities
- Changes in nutrition status.

Adverse impacts on community safety and security include:

- Increased tension, disputes and conflicts between locals and migrants concerning natural resources, employment opportunities and other project benefits
- Increased incidence of social ills, including alcoholism, drug abuse, prostitution, gambling
- Increase in domestic violence
- Increase in criminality
- Decrease in law and order
- Increased ethnic tension and violence.

Adverse impacts on social dynamics within the project's areas of influence include:

- Challenges in power relationships, including undermining and changing of traditional leadership and authority structures
- Challenges to community values, norms, customs and behaviour
- Challenges to traditional institutions and systems of governance
- Impacts on traditional beliefs, damage to cultural heritage
- Dilution of social cohesion and cultural disruption
- Changing relationships between groups (gender, age, socio-economic status, ethnicity)
- Possible marginalisation of women, ethnic minorities, and other vulnerable groups
- Loss of local identity
- Loss of knowledge, skills and experience related to traditional livelihood activities
- Welfare imbalances and differential wage incomes, wealth accumulation and opportunities
- Creation of land markets leading to changes in traditional land tenure systems.

Assessment of the potential positive and negative environmental and social impacts associated with PIIM requires a multi-sectoral team able to bring together an understanding of

the pre-project context, the project, the dynamics of PIIM, the potential area development trajectories, as well as expertise across the relevant sectoral areas. To help develop an awareness and understanding of PIIM, and the requirements of environmental and social impact assessment in relation to PIIM, it is useful to consider the different types of projects that might drive PIIM and the nature of the environmental and social impacts and risks that may result. Different projects have varying propensity to trigger PIIM. At one end of the spectrum could be short-term, relatively small infrastructure projects, such as: roads, bridges and pipelines; small-scale industrial projects with a discreet footprint; and/or projects in developed areas that have considerable assimilative capacity. At the other end would be large-scale, long-life projects developed in remote, under-developed areas with limited connectivity to the mainstream economy, especially where these projects would be characterised as transformative.

Predicted direct, tangible and immediate impacts are more readily understood and easier to assess. For example, these might include: impacts on settlements and housing; potential health impacts and risks; increased demand on infrastructure, services and utilities; and competition for project benefit streams, particularly employment. However, assessment of the potential impacts on the socio-cultural characteristics of local communities and household and community livelihoods is more difficult, needing consideration of community leadership, community culture and customs, values and norms, community institutions, governance (of people and resources), community and household assimilative and adaptive capacity and community and household resilience.

It is also important to assess the political economy of project development and potential impacts on planned area-wide development and possible impacts on and ways in which PIIM might be managed. Put differently, assessment of stakeholder interests (including government, project and the communities in the project's areas of influence), potential roles and responsibilities, willingness, capacity and resources to manage PIIM and its impacts is an important input into designing an effective management strategy and plan. Certain stakeholders may view project development and transformation of the (economic) landscape as a development opportunity connecting and ultimately integrating relatively marginalised areas and populations with the mainstream economy. Such transformation presents significant opportunities for better-resourced and capable stakeholders to benefit, leading to an influx of state, economic and elite actors that can significantly challenge multi-stakeholder efforts to manage PIIM, or that favour certain development trajectories, e.g. the development of improved infrastructure and associated industry. Other stakeholders (e.g. development assistance agencies) might see project development as a livelihood development opportunity. If engaged early and pro-actively, these actors may become partners in the development process.

IN-MIGRATION RISK AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The assessment of PIIM generally has two key components. First, to conduct a high-level assessment of the likelihood and potential significance of PIIM. Such assessment is based on consideration of the probability of in-migration, the project context, the project, and the likely types of in-migration-induced environmental and social changes in the project context. This assessment establishes whether the project should develop a PIIM management strategy and plan. Second, once the need to develop a PIIM management strategy and plan has been established, a situation analysis is required. The situation analysis looks at predicted magnitude and

rate of in-migration, pathways for in-migration, predicted settlement patterns (i.e. the influx footprint and in-migration hotspots), and the most significant associated potential impacts and risks. This analysis will inform management options and should lead to the development of a management strategy, and possibly a stand-alone management plan.

For large-scale transformational projects developed in more remote and marginalised areas, experience demonstrates that migration to participate in and benefit from project development is common across developing countries, whether in the Pacific, Asia, Africa or South America. In contrast, the dynamics of project in-migration for smaller-scale projects suggest a more limited pull factor, operating over a smaller geographical area, and leading to both a lower rate and smaller magnitude of influx and a more limited influx footprint, although this does not necessarily reduce the potential significance of potential impacts.

The likelihood and nature of PIIM impacts in the project's areas of influence determine the need for a PIIM management strategy and plan, and the type of interventions required to manage the impacts. General indicators that help predict whether potential impacts are likely to be less or more significant include:

- factors promoting project dependency and concentration within the project's areas of influence;
- relative rate and magnitude of in-migration;
- assimilative capacity of the project area; and
- various site, region and national-level specific factors.

The design of a PIIM management strategy and plan requires a detailed assessment of the rate, magnitude and area-specific expression of PIIM and its potential impacts. Such assessment should include consideration of: the ability of the host environment to receive an influx population; project characteristics (e.g. accessibility, scale, duration); the magnitude of direct and indirect opportunities for the local population to participate and benefit; the area's capacity to meet project needs; and the willingness and mobility of people to pursue opportunities. The assessment of these characteristics requires an understanding of national, regional and local socio-economic-cultural factors (including demography, poverty, unemployment and under-employment, regional and national ethnic relations, etc.) and a detailed understanding of the project and project context.

MANAGEMENT OF PROJECT-INDUCED IN-MIGRATION

The management of PIIM typically involves a combination of interventions seeking to minimise the in-migration phenomenon, influence its physical expression within the project's areas of influence, and mitigate the most significant potential adverse impacts (see Table 26.1). Given that in-migration occurs across a spatial/geographical continuum, interventions may be combined to address the periphery (entry points), the staging posts, and the centre (hotspots). Generally, early interventions allow pro-active measures to be developed in order to avoid, minimise and influence the on-the-ground expression of PIIM, while later interventions tend to focus on mitigating adverse impacts (i.e. are reactive).

The management of in-migration and its impacts should be linked to local and regional development plans. Management should involve multiple stakeholders including: local, regional and national governments; communities; development partners; and the project. The

Table 26.1 Management approaches for project-induced in-migration

Purpose of interventions	Possible areas of intervention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pro-active promotion of positive development trajectory ● Minimising in-migration into the project area ● Staging the inflow of migrants ● Managing the migrant physical and social footprint ● Allocation and protection of local capture of project benefits ● Promoting management of adverse social impacts 	<p>Area Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promoting regional growth/multi-polar development ● Spatial planning, administration and resource allocation (including identification of appropriate settlement sites and creating pull factors) ● Increase capacity of infrastructure, services and utilities <p>Project Operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Project communications and stakeholder engagement ● Planning workforce recruitment policy and management ● Access control ● Planning material transportation ● Planning worker transportation ● Planning worker housing ● Planning procurement of goods and services and development of supply centres <p>Managing Project Benefit Distribution and Capture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Definition of project-affected people, compensation, participation and development <p>Managing Adverse Social Impacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identification of key areas of concern; defining programmes and contracting service providers to deliver; ongoing monitoring and evaluation of results. For example, building awareness and capacity of the population in project hotspots and areas of influence regarding PIIM and capacity to manage

Source: Adapted from IFC (2009).

management of PIIM and its impacts should consider the following issues: project design; stakeholder engagement, capacity and resources; management of project-induced in-migration into the project’s areas of influence; mitigation of adverse impacts; and the ongoing monitoring of in-migration and impacts. These are discussed below.

Project Design

Project design involves the integration of technical, economic, physical, environmental and social considerations into site selection, the design of the project, development of shared infrastructure, etc. Projects with medium to high probability of influx should integrate influx management considerations into project design, especially for projects with protracted development periods and that involve early PIIM. The early consideration and adoption of a ‘whole of project life’ perspective has the potential to significantly influence the way in which PIIM is expressed in subsequent phases of project development. In practice, however, PIIM management plans tend to only be developed for the main construction phase of the project. This has proved to be problematic because, when developed at this late stage, it is unclear: (i) whether there has been consideration of how the project may be a catalyst for growth (and hence the need to consider regional development trajectories) and how this should affect PIIM management; (ii) whether the potential positive and adverse impacts from the project (including building foundations and enabling conditions for growth) have been adequately considered and managed; and (iii) to what extent such considerations are integrated into planning at project footprint and landscape scales. Consequently, construction-phase PIIM management

plans primarily address issues associated with benefit distribution and capture and the adverse social–economic–cultural impacts associated with PIIM.

Early phase activities, the shape of the project footprint and its relation to nearby communities and urban centres may be used to influence influx dynamics, including entry and pattern of settlement. For example, the active maintenance of buffer zones may protect the project and established communities from new fence-line settlements. Depending on the project context, due consideration should be given to potential access routes and in-migrant access to project information. Various possible interventions, including multi-step access, regional recruitment centres, and established reception areas, are potentially useful in managing inflow.

Many projects catalyse broader social and economic development, as well as links to, and integration with, the mainstream economy. Depending on the project context, it is useful for a project to consider the nature of its ongoing role in regional development and how it might position itself within this dynamic process, with particular emphasis on: (i) design that contributes to broader economic development; and (ii) the promotion of multiple growth centres (nodes) and/or strategies to promote diversification of rural livelihoods. The establishment of geographically separated multiple growth centres has the potential to alter the pull factors and thus the expression and experience of PIIM.

Stakeholder Engagement, Capacity and Resources

The assessment and management of PIIM may involve multiple stakeholders including: local, regional and national governments; development partners; the private sector; communities within the project's areas of influence; and the project. To help guide development of a strategy and plan, it is necessary to assess the stakeholders, their positions, interests, capacity, and resources. However, effective stakeholder participation and engagement can only be achieved through early engagement, multi-stakeholder frameworks and capacity building.

The large range of potential roles and responsibilities in the management of impacts and in area development indicates the utility of building partnerships for the delivery of development projects with governments at all levels, development agencies, the private sector, and non-governmental organisations. With multiple social management plans and project activities occurring simultaneously, projects often engage stakeholders on a piecemeal basis, thereby failing to provide an overarching integrated and holistic view of the social impacts and risks, stakeholders' perspectives, and stakeholder roles and responsibilities. Investment in establishing fora through which such engagement can occur is often limited; the default outcome is that the project assumes responsibility for most management interventions and there is limited recognition of these efforts by non-project stakeholders.

While establishing multi-stakeholder frameworks is critical, equally important is an understanding of stakeholder capacity and resources. Ensuring that people have a meaningful opportunity to participate, and have their views heard and considered, must not be conditional upon, equated with, or even carry the expectation that these people have the capacity and resources to act. In marginalised, remote and under-developed areas where human development indicators are low and government presence, capacity and resources are limited, it is unreasonable to be prepared to engage without also being able to facilitate.

Effective Delivery of Project Benefits

The determination of project benefits for local communities must be coupled with the development of capacity of local people to effectively claim, access and protect these benefits. Such capacity involves the support of leadership and governance to manage (and protect) ‘local-first’ benefits and prioritisation, as well as the ability to meaningfully participate in economic activity (e.g. vocational training, enterprise development, microfinance and savings). The issue of whether community leaders and representatives should be asked to develop, implement and enforce governance arrangements pertaining to the distribution and protection of project benefits and access to resources must be considered, and decisions must be made to either strengthen their capacity to do this, or to avoid placing significant and essentially undeliverable social management obligations on them.

Mitigation of Adverse Social Impacts

The negative social impacts of PIIM can be addressed through strengthening stakeholder (e.g. local and regional governments, civil society, non-government organisations, and communities) awareness and capacity to be involved in managing the changing social dynamic; and by addressing the key potential impacts through targeted sectoral programmes aimed at improving spatial planning, governance, law and order, housing, water, sanitation, and health.

Ongoing Monitoring of In-migration and its Impacts

PIIM is a dynamic process, and the ability to monitor and adapt management to ongoing in-migration and settlement, and to changes and impacts in the community context, is critical. Given the nature of the in-migration phenomenon and the need for multi-stakeholder participation, a participatory community-based monitoring programme is recommended. Such a programme might involve: community representatives monitoring key indicators; community documentation of change in their environment, e.g. through sharing photographs; periodic community-level meetings; and drone or satellite imagery of key hotspots. Monitoring can be supplemented with government data on village level population monitoring, and by health data from clinics and hospitals (also see Chapter 37).

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PIIM MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND PLAN

Following the risk assessment and situation analysis, projects should develop a PIIM management strategy and plan that sets out the project approach to managing the in-migration phenomenon and its impacts. Note that the purpose of a PIIM strategy and plan is not to prevent in-migration, but to manage its expression and pro-actively address adverse impacts. While all projects where PIIM is a risk need to develop a management strategy, not all projects need to develop a stand-alone management plan. The need for a plan is determined by the project context and type of project, the extent to which influx was being addressed in other plans, the predicted dynamics of in-migration, and its potential impacts. For certain projects, it might be sufficient to document identified interventions and assign roles and responsibilities to various

project functions. In contrast, for large-scale projects that are transformative at the landscape level, a detailed stand-alone plan will be required.

The strategy and plan need to address key issues, including: the target population and sectors; selection of management interventions; timing of interventions; and the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders. It should be noted that the relevance of the possible interventions varies according to stage in the project cycle, and the status of in-migration and impacts being experienced. Stakeholder capacity building, engagement and influx monitoring should be included as standard activities to support awareness, increase understanding, build partnerships and improve participation in the delivery of the strategy and plan.

In developing a PIIM management strategy and plan, it is recommended that a participatory multi-stakeholder process be established to identify and select interventions to assist in managing in-migration (inflow), its footprint in the project's areas of influence, and its impacts. Such a process is likely to include the following steps:

- Definition of need/purpose
- Identification of possible interventions that address the defined need
- Assessment and assignment of roles and responsibilities of government, communities, development partners, and the project
- Assessment of the capacity of the various internal project functions and activities – health and safety, security, environment, etc. – that share responsibility to implement the PIIM plan
- Assessment of the design, construction and management requirements of possible interventions
- Assessment of the resourcing requirements of proposed interventions
- Evaluation of the efficacy of proposed interventions
- Selection of preferred interventions.

CONCLUSION

Projects have the potential to catalyse change within the project's areas of influence throughout the project lifecycle, although the most rapid and significant changes are typically associated with project construction. The relationship between project construction and local and regional development is generally identified as a positive outcome associated with project development, yet the assumption that local development will inevitably benefit local communities is questionable, both in relation to their participation and benefit from the project, as well as the more general socio-economic development of the area.

Project-induced in-migration is a major driver of change in the local contexts where projects are being developed. The PIIM phenomenon is a dynamic process that involves: an inflow of migrants into a project's areas of influence; the processes through which incoming people become established locally; and the potential positive and negative environmental and social impacts from this. Accordingly, projects need to assess the probability of in-migration and its potential environmental and social impacts, and develop a PIIM management strategy and plan to manage, avoid, minimise and mitigate the adverse impacts of in-migration.

Projects often miss the opportunity to pro-actively develop the readiness, capacity and resilience of the population residing within the project's areas of influence so that they cope

better with in-migration. In such situations, PIIM management tends to focus only on the management of project functional areas (e.g. project operations, construction and supply, project workforce recruitment, transport and accommodation, project security), benefit distribution, and mitigating the high risk, short-term tangible environmental and social impacts of PIIM. However, when addressed early in the project development cycle, PIIM management can include interventions promoting planned area development. For large-scale projects that are transformative at a landscape level, the early pro-active assessment and management of PIIM should be a component of the holistic consideration of the project–area development interface. This could lead to pro-actively developing area-development plans corresponding to the project’s development and social management plans. Multi-stakeholder frameworks that ensure awareness, understanding, ownership and collective responsibility in managing change processes and ongoing participatory monitoring are required.

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27. Benefit-sharing and enhancing outcomes for project-affected communities

Frank Vanclay

INTRODUCTION

In the context of the social performance of projects and project social impact assessment (SIA), loosely speaking, ‘benefit-sharing’ refers to the sharing of benefits between a project and its local or host communities (IFC, 2019, 2021). At the very least, this means deliberate attempts to enhance outcomes for project affected peoples. Ideally, however, it means financial or other arrangements so that the project-affected peoples become beneficiaries of the project. Community opposition to windfarms, for example, is likely to be much less when the community as a whole directly benefits from the energy that is produced (World Bank, 2019). Sometimes, the defined recipient group is extended beyond immediate project-affected people to encompass the subnational region in which the project is based. Most international standards and international financial institutions encourage that there be some degree of benefit-sharing in all projects and suggest that all projects should be proactive in thinking about how outcomes for local communities could be enhanced. This can happen by distributing resources to affected communities, providing assistance in various ways, and by careful thinking about how the project is implemented.

Benefit-sharing has been a World Bank requirement of projects involving involuntary resettlement since 1990 (World Bank, 1990; Price et al., 2020), although benefit-sharing was not normally required or expected for projects that did not involve resettlement, even though it was advocated. In recent decades, this has been changing, with most international financial institutions strengthening their policies relating to benefit-sharing. Several countries have implemented laws entailing some form of benefit-sharing arrangements, including Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Greenland, India, Japan, Kenya, Mali, Nepal, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Sierra Leone, and South Africa (Van Wicklin, 1999; DDP, 2007; Égré et al., 2007; Söderholm & Svahn, 2015; IGF, 2020; Price et al., 2020; Wankhede, 2020; Chen et al., 2021; Koenig, 2021; Kung et al., 2022). Although these countries mandate that projects have benefit-sharing arrangements, it was otherwise normally understood that benefit-sharing was a voluntary action beyond mandatory payments (e.g. normal taxation payments, royalties) or compensation for lost land or assets. Compensation that replaces a loss is, by definition, not a benefit, since such compensation is a replacement and is (or should be) an entitlement. Payments of normal taxes and royalties, especially to the nation state, are not what is meant by ‘benefits’ (unless they are redistributed to local communities), since these are normal requirements of all business operations (Schulz & Skinner, 2022).

Despite the recommendations for benefit-sharing arrangements and enhancement of outcomes, few projects have actually delivered benefits to any significant extent, and all projects could improve their conception and delivery of benefits to affected communities. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to increase awareness of the expectation that projects should

deliver benefits to local communities, and to improve understanding of the range of possible benefit-sharing mechanisms. It also discusses some problematic issues with benefit-sharing.

Although the ideal form of benefit-sharing might be where local communities become co-owners in the project, this rarely occurs, and in any case would be problematic in a public sector project or any project where there is no revenue flow after construction. Consequently, in the fields of social performance and SIA, ‘benefit-sharing’ tends to mean any attempt to enhance project outcomes for affected communities beyond what would normally be provided by the project. However, as the International Hydropower Association (IHA, 2019) pointed out, activities that do not impose additional costs on a project and any advantages that are inherent to a project should not be regarded as a benefit. For example, the construction of a power station might ordinarily result in electricity supply to a local community that is cheaper than what was available previously. While this might be advantageous to the local community, it does not constitute a ‘benefit’ in the sense of what is understood by ‘benefit-sharing’. Furthermore, any actions that are done to mitigate negative social impacts would only be a benefit when they are done beyond what was required by local law or international standards.

The concept of benefit-sharing is consistent with the changing understanding of the role of business in society. In the emerging understanding of business, companies do not have an automatic or inherent right to operate, but need to contribute ‘shared value’ to the communities in which they are located (Porter & Kramer, 2011). Benefit-sharing is also associated with the idea that projects need to have a social licence to operate, make a positive contribution to their host communities, and that they should undertake various activities to enhance their social licence (Jijelava & Vanclay, 2017; Vanclay & Hanna, 2019; Veenker & Vanclay, 2021). Benefit-sharing is an umbrella concept that includes a wide range of actions, some of which are addressed by other chapters in this book. Sometimes, the sharing of benefits is formalised through a Benefit-sharing Agreement, an Impacts and Benefits Agreement, or a Community Development Agreement. Frequently, projects implement some form of social investment strategy, which would normally be part of their benefit-sharing arrangements (whether or not this language is used) (Esteves & Vanclay, 2009). Although the enhancement of benefits has been a key part of SIA for decades (Holden, 1991; Esteves & Vanclay, 2009; Vanclay & Esteves, 2011; Esteves et al., 2012; Vanclay, 2014; Vanclay et al., 2015), the amount of attention given to it has increased in recent years (João et al., 2011; Vanclay, 2020) and there remains a strong need to increase the performance of projects in this regard.

JUSTIFICATIONS FOR BENEFIT-SHARING

The original justification for benefit-sharing in a project context was based around the realisation that there was a lack of fair compensation and especially a lack of effort to restore livelihoods, especially where people were being resettled to make way for projects (van Wicklin, 1999; Cernea, 2008; Price et al., 2020). Recognition that there was considerable harm and suffering being created by development-induced displacement and resettlement (especially from dams) meant that it was only fair that those who were being displaced should also receive some benefits, as van Wicklin (1999, p. 234) argued:

Giving up one’s home and land is much more than an economic transaction: it has profound social, cultural, and psychological ramifications. Communities and neighborhoods, with their mutual support and labor exchange networks, are often broken up and dispersed as a consequence of forced

relocation. Cultural losses include ties to the land, ancestral sites, indigenous knowledge of local production systems, and other forms of cultural heritage. Among the psychological costs and consequences of relocation are isolation, alienation, anomie, substance abuse, higher rates of prostitution and divorce, and other signs of social disarticulation ... Since resettlers [sic] are called upon to make sacrifices for the general good by giving up their habitats and their income generating assets, it is only equitable that they should share in the benefits of the project displacing them.

This line of reasoning, however, is problematic because, in this argument, ‘benefit-sharing’ is *de facto* compensation, and thus, strictly speaking, is not a benefit. The contemporary understanding of benefit-sharing is that it is about the sharing of resources above and beyond appropriate compensation for any losses or impacts, including those mentioned by van Wicklin.

There are several reasons why companies might engage in benefit-sharing. Benefit-sharing arrangements are likely to assist communities in coping with change and in overcoming any negative social impacts. They are likely to result in local communities having a positive impression of the project. If the arrangements are structured fairly, they would prevent or reduce increasing disparity in the community, thus contributing to distributive justice. An ethical argument might be that the people who make sacrifices or suffer because of a project should be the first people to benefit from the project (Price et al., 2020). Another rationale is that such actions reveal that the project and its backers recognise and respect the rights of local communities (even where they are not recognised by the state). Finally, from a project perspective, benefit-sharing is likely to contribute to getting a social licence to operate (Veenker & Vanclay, 2021).

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR BENEFIT-SHARING IN INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

The various international organisations (UN bodies, international financial institutions, etc.) each have different wordings about benefit-sharing in their policies and other guidance documents, but in general they all encourage some effort to enhance outcomes, although this is not always clearly stated (or mandated) in their standards or guidance. For example, the IFC Performance Standards (IFC, 2012a), which is regarded as the ‘gold standard’ of international standards (Vanclay & Hanna, 2019), only has minimal explicit mention of enhancement or benefit-sharing, and then primarily in the context of resettlement or Indigenous peoples. For example, Article 9 of PS5 states: ‘The client will also provide opportunities to displaced communities and persons to derive appropriate development benefits from the project’ (IFC, 2012a, p. 34). Article 14 of PS7 states: ‘Ensuring fair and equitable sharing of benefits associated with project usage of the resources where the client intends to utilize natural resources that are central to the identity and livelihood of Affected Communities of Indigenous Peoples and their usage thereof exacerbates livelihood risk’ (IFC, 2012a, p. 51). Article 18 of PS7 states: ‘The client and the Affected Communities of Indigenous Peoples will identify mitigation measures in alignment with the mitigation hierarchy described in Performance Standard 1 as well as opportunities for culturally appropriate and sustainable development benefits’ (IFC, 2012a, p. 52).

The IFC Guidance Notes (IFC, 2012b) has greater mention, but still lacks a strong statement about benefit-sharing. One example is GN6 of Guidance Note 1: ‘An effective engagement process allows the views, interests and concerns of different stakeholders, particularly of

the local communities directly affected by the project (Affected Communities), to be heard, understood, and taken into account in project decisions and creation of development benefits' (IFC, 2012b, p. 4). Nevertheless, despite this low level of explicit mention of benefit-sharing in the IFC performance standards and guidelines, the strong support for benefit-sharing within the IFC is evident in several other documents it has published (e.g. IFC, 2015a, 2019, 2021).

The World Bank (2017) Environmental and Social Standards are also somewhat understated. However, the Vision for Sustainable Development, which is a preamble to the standards, states that: 'The Bank's vision goes beyond "do no harm" to maximizing development gains. Where the Borrower's environmental and social assessment has identified potential development opportunities associated with the project, the Bank will discuss with the Borrower the feasibility of including these opportunities in the project. Where appropriate, such opportunities may be utilized to promote further development' (World Bank, 2017, p. 2). In ESS1 Para 24, the World Bank states that they expect that the environmental and social assessment will 'evaluate the project's potential environmental and social risks and impacts; examine project alternatives; identify ways of improving project selection, siting, planning, design, and implementation in order to apply the mitigation hierarchy for adverse environmental and social impacts *and seek opportunities to enhance the positive impacts of the project*' (World Bank, 2017, p. 18, emphasis added).

In contrast, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has its expectations strongly stated in its Safeguards Policy Statement (ADB, 2009). Policy Principle 4 of the Environment Safeguard states: 'Avoid, and where avoidance is not possible, minimize, mitigate, and/or offset adverse impacts *and enhance positive impacts by means of environmental planning and management*' (ADB, 2009, p. 16, emphasis added). The Safeguards Policy Statement provides an example contents listing for EIA reports. Section E of such a report is entitled 'Anticipated Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures', and states:

This section predicts and assesses the project's likely *positive* and negative direct and indirect impacts to physical, biological, socioeconomic (including occupational health and safety, community health and safety, vulnerable groups and gender issues, and impacts on livelihoods through environmental media ... and physical cultural resources in the project's area of influence, in quantitative terms to the extent possible; identifies mitigation measures and any residual negative impacts that cannot be mitigated; *explores opportunities for enhancement*; identifies and estimates the extent and quality of available data, key data gaps, and uncertainties associated with predictions and specifies topics that do not require further attention; and examines global, transboundary, and cumulative impacts as appropriate. (ADB, 2009, p. 41, emphasis added)

There are also provisions about maximising social benefits in the ADB's Operational Manuals, *Gender and Development in ADB Operations* (OM-C2), and *Incorporation of Social Dimensions into ADB Operations* (OM-C3), where it states that the ADB:

- (iii) integrates social analysis in preparing country partnership strategies and regional strategies and programmes; identifies potential social issues during project preparation *to ensure that the project design maximizes social benefits* and avoids or minimizes social risks, particularly for vulnerable and marginalized groups; and
- (iv) *ensures that project design and implementation arrangements include actions to enhance benefits and to monitor and evaluate the distribution of the benefits of the project*, with performance targets and indicators for monitoring and evaluating benefits included in the design and monitoring framework of the project performance management system. (ADB, 2010, p. 2, emphasis added)

The Inter-American Development Bank, which recently updated its *Environmental and Social Policy Framework* (IDB, 2020), also has a strong statement:

The IDB is also committed to *maximizing sustainable development benefits, in accordance with the 'do good beyond do not harm' [sic] principle*. The IDB requires its Borrowers to not only report on ways in which harms will be avoided, but also *consider and report on ways in which project design will enhance both the social and the environmental good*. Where the environmental and social assessment of the project has identified such potential opportunities in sustainable development, the Bank will consider with the Borrower the feasibility of including these opportunities in the project, or mainstreaming them in IDB country strategies to strengthen the country's environmental and social governance systems. Where appropriate, such opportunities may be utilized to promote further sustainability in development. (IDB, 2020, p. 6, emphasis added)

In the extractives sector, there is a fairly strong awareness and culture of the need to provide improved outcomes for local communities. For example, Principle 9 of the ICMM (2020) *Mining Principles* requires that mining companies: 'Pursue continual improvement in social performance and contribute to the social, economic and institutional development of host countries and communities'. This sentiment is also reflected in the ICMM (2022) guidance document on social performance. However, whether mining companies always deliver on this expectation is another matter (Kemp & Owen, 2013; Price et al., 2020). Most other industry sectors seem to lack a culture of commitment to benefit-sharing (Price et al., 2020; Schulz & Skinner, 2022).

CLASSIFYING BENEFIT-SHARING MECHANISMS

Benefit-sharing mechanisms can be classified in many ways, including according to the nature of the benefit, how the benefits are financed, or by the justification about who is eligible to benefit from the scheme. To give some sense of the range of benefit-sharing mechanisms, the following structure is used (developed by drawing on a range of sources including DDP, 2007; Égré et al., 2007; Cernea, 2008; Wall & Pelon, 2011; IPIECA, 2017; Vanclay, 2017a, 2017b; Vanclay & Hanna, 2019; Kung et al., 2022).

Direct Benefits and/or Being an Intended Project Beneficiary

Sometimes, development projects are specifically intended to be for the benefit of local people, for example, regional development or public housing projects. Since these projects are intended to be for this beneficial purpose, the concept of benefit-sharing does not normally apply to these projects, although it should be noted that even projects intended to benefit local communities can still have negative social impacts and may not always achieve their intended goals. For instance, people relocated from flood-prone or landslip-prone locations are likely to experience many negative social impacts, even though they are relocated to a safer location. Improving physical safety (reducing the risk of disaster) is only one aspect of people's wellbeing, and such relocations need to consider the totality of people's lives, including their livelihoods, essential public services, community functioning, and community resilience (Vanclay, 2002; Smyth & Vanclay, 2017). There is room for improvement in all these actions.

Some projects primarily intended for purposes other than benefiting the local community might generate outputs that still could be a direct benefit to local communities. For example,

an irrigation dam could also provide irrigation water for local people, and any displaced people might be granted plots of irrigated land. People affected by a hydroelectric dam could be provided with electricity. People displaced by an urban development project could be provided with improved housing in the same neighbourhood. Note that if the provision of the asset or service was only intended to be compensation for the loss experienced, then it is not a benefit – it would only be a benefit where the outcome was additional to reasonable compensation.

Financial Benefits

When people are affected by projects for which they are not an intended direct beneficiary, there is a range of financial mechanisms that can be utilised to enhance their wellbeing. These are often applied in situations where local people have strong rights and/or whose consent must be given before a project can proceed, as well as when people are being resettled or otherwise will experience major negative social impacts from the project. Examples include:

- (for an income-generating project) the allocation of a percentage share of project revenue streams, for example to finance community development programmes on an ongoing basis;
- the establishment of a community development fund (social investment fund) with one or more tranche payments from project funding (perhaps related to project milestones), typically in which the principal is preserved while generating interest to be used for ongoing community development programmes;
- equity sharing in any project-created enterprises that might be established;
- in addition to any normal taxes or charges that might be due, the payment of additional special contributions to regional and/or local governments to support local development programmes;
- the allocation of shares in the ownership of the project to people in the impacted community (either collectively or individually), thus creating co-ownership in the project;
- direct payments to all affected persons (typically as bank transfers rather than as cash);
- (rather than a direct payment) payments that are tied to (i.e. cross-compliance arrangements for) the provision of certain services or the performance of tasks, such as for maintaining heritage or traditional practices, or maintaining habitat (in which case it would be a payment for environmental services).

There are arguments for and against each of these options. For example, providing free electricity or gas might lead to wastage through a lack of incentive for efficiency. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide a full analysis of each option, but a general discussion of issues is provided further below. Before any scheme is proposed, careful consideration of how it will work out in practice is needed.

Non-Financial Benefits (Enhancement of Outcomes)

The non-financial benefits or enhancement of outcomes for local communities that a project can provide include:

- providing jobs for impacted or local people;
- appropriate strategies to maximise opportunities for local content and local procurement by removing barriers to entry and employing other strategies to make it possible for local enterprises to supply goods and services to the project;

- the provision of training, mentoring and other support programmes for local people and businesses, especially related to helping them manage effectively in the new operating environment;
- modifying project infrastructure and facilities to ensure that these facilities can also service local community needs and/or by allowing public use of these facilities. This is often called ‘shared infrastructure’. One example of shared infrastructure is an airport. Instead of being a company-only airport to only service the project, it could be made into a public airport;
- making project equipment (heavy lift cranes, bulldozers, etc.) available to local authorities to assist in public works;
- various good neighbour, good corporate citizen initiatives, such as encouraging community volunteer work by staff;
- area development – ensuring that the whole local population benefits from things like the upgrading of roads, provision of a new or upgraded airport, flood protection, public services and community facilities including, for example, reliable access to water, electricity, internet, etc.;
- improved public services (healthcare, education);
- in the case of electricity generation projects (e.g. hydropower dams, solar farms or windfarms), transmission lines, or gas pipelines etc., the provision of free or discounted electricity (or gas) to impacted peoples.

A HYPOTHETICAL EXAMPLE: THE BENEFIT-SHARING ARRANGEMENTS THAT MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO BE PROVIDED BY A ROAD PROJECT

To give some sense of what benefit-sharing might mean in actual practice, let’s consider what potentially could be done in a road project. As road projects have a specific purpose and create certain direct impacts in the landscape, many road-related enhancement actions can be conceived, many of which are arguably highly consistent with the planning and construction of roads. Some actions are essential to mitigate the negative impacts of construction and ongoing operation of the project, and these would not be regarded as benefits. However, in addition to essential mitigation, a road project could:

- improve local roads, especially those that feed into the major road project, especially in situations where the new main road is not seen as a local benefit;
- provide road safety training programmes to increase road safety awareness (the improvement of major roads is likely to increase the speed of vehicles travelling on the main road, but this can lead to accidents with local traffic using or crossing the main road and/or with roadside pedestrians or farm animals);
- provide roadside fencing if needed, rather than this being a burden imposed on local people;
- negotiate with local communities and carefully consider where appropriate picnic spots and/or lookout stops might be built along the road;
- develop a strategy relating to informal roadside vendors, which could include creating special areas where roadside vendors would be encouraged to operate (pre-existing vendors might be displaced by the road project); the new road will increase traffic volumes

increasing interest in roadside vendor activities; roadside vendors can be a traffic hazard and prone to being harmed by traffic. It would normally be considered irresponsible of the project if there was no vendor strategy developed;

- contribute to the restoration of local buildings and/or sites of heritage value, especially where they are in close proximity to the road and/or likely to be affected by vibration, dust, drainage issues, impact from vehicles coming off the road, or by the increased attention of people due to proximity to the road;
- contribute to local natural resource management and/or environmental management programmes, for example by enhancing or increasing the amount of green space;
- consider aesthetic issues in road design, and beautification of the road, verges, and surroundings, especially in landscapes of high scenic value and those designated as being of outstanding natural beauty;
- where people will become noise affected by realignment of a road or by increased traffic volumes, provide replacement housing or support them to increase the sound insulation of their houses. Noise considerations should also be factored into road design and materials. Note that where this would have to be done because of exceedances of noise limits, this would be impact mitigation rather than a benefit, but where this was done when the noise levels were not above regulatory limits, it would be regarded as a benefit;
- award road maintenance contracts to local people (because this would be a direct benefit to local people and may actually be the most efficient way of undertaking road maintenance);
- where construction will take an extended period of time, negotiate with the local community how worker accommodation should be provided. Instead of always using a temporary construction camp, consider alternatives, which might include using existing accommodation, or building accommodation that can be re-used (re-purposed) by the local community after project construction stops;
- provide training and opportunities (especially for women), for example by assisting them in obtaining a driving licence (apart from being an empowerment action, in rural areas, people may not have had a driving licence before and may create a traffic hazard when traffic volumes and average speed increase);
- provide assistance with regional planning (improved roads have a direct effect on development options because the roads change the background context and possible assumptions about future options);
- facilitate small enterprise development (because roads impact on the local economy);
- help local people (SMEs) with business plans or agricultural development opportunities (to be able to better service the increase in people and/or to deal with economic displacement; and because the increased access facilitated by the new road will impact on the local economy, in that the cost of transport in and out will be cheaper, thus imports will also be cheaper and local exports will be more cost effective);
- provide basic-level language training courses (e.g. in appropriate languages), especially in situations where road users might speak other languages than local people. Providing language training for basic communication could increase the sales volume of small businesses and/or would assist in dealing with any emergencies that might arise, e.g. a traffic accident;
- introduce mechanisms (including but not limited to training) to increase awareness of HIV and sexually transmitted diseases, human trafficking and modern slavery, and gender-based violence.

In many contexts, roads facilitate prostitution, specifically ‘truckstop prostitution’. The concept of ‘mobile men with money’ is a relative context, and many factors contribute to the interplay between road users (especially truck drivers) and local people. Depending on the context, it might be appropriate to increase awareness in local communities about the social changes likely to occur with a new road, and about the potential for sexual exploitation, trafficking, and prostitution to occur, so that there might be some awareness about how communities and people individually could act in specific situations (Tserendorj et al., 2013).

In addition to the above activities that have a clear connection to roads, it would not be unreasonable to consider that a road project could assist in various off-road works (or non-road works), for example improving drainage systems (water flow) and irrigation (especially when they might be affected by the road). Arguably, a road project has a lot of big equipment on site, and this equipment could be used for other things nearby – especially as a big part of the cost is getting the equipment to the site. Recognising that some rural areas are in poverty and generally have limited public services, the project could assist in encouraging service providers to increase service provision for the benefit of local people as well as for the travellers. This might, for example, include the road company working with telephone service providers to improve phone service and coverage. Or working with the electricity company to expand the electricity network. An increased volume of traffic, higher average speed, more people, and more accidents (although noting that a justification for roads is often to reduce accidents) are likely to put increased strain on the local healthcare services. Thus, improving local healthcare services, especially to deal with accident and emergency situations, is highly appropriate.

As improved rural roads are likely to lead to increased numbers of tourists and tourism opportunities, assisting SMEs in establishing or improving guesthouses or wayside cafés might be appropriate. New or improved roads are likely to generate traffic including day-tripping and stay-over tourists, as well as through travellers wanting a short or overnight stopover. It could be useful to provide training to potential accommodation providers or café owners about small business management, accounting, and the effective business use of social media and booking platforms, etc.

THE ROLE OF FOUNDATIONS AND TRUST FUNDS

Although there are many forms of benefit-sharing, in the past the default fall-back option tended to be establishment of a Social Investment Fund, usually managed by an independent foundation with a Board comprising local people and sometimes a company representative. Perhaps this was done by companies in the belief that this was a minimum-effort, minimum-risk strategy. This arrangement might be justified by arguments that responsibility was being handed to local communities. However, unless the Board is well trained and carefully monitored (i.e. transparency and accountability), and there is a strong commitment to good governance, things may not turn out effectively, and the fund may even become a risk for the project and the community. Much research has been done on good practice in relation to such funds and there are many guidance documents (e.g. World Bank, 2010; IFC, 2010, 2015b; IPIECA, 2017), which should be carefully considered before any fund is established. Nowadays, it is more common for projects themselves to establish a social investment programme, managed in house, with a suite of projects being implemented.

HISTORY OF THE CONCEPT OF BENEFIT-SHARING

It is difficult to establish precisely when the expression ‘benefit-sharing’ first came into use. However, searching on Google Scholar using decadal date ranges, several papers published between the 1960s and 1990s can be found that used the term in a way that suggested the expression was a normalised concept by then (e.g. Euler & Dobyns, 1961; Michelman, 1967; Larmour, 1989; Holden, 1991) – although perhaps with a somewhat different meaning to this chapter. ‘Benefit-sharing’ is, of course, a colloquial expression or shorthand for things like sharing project benefits, the fair distribution of benefits, maximising or enhancing positive impacts or outcomes, and ‘sharing the gains and not just the pains’ from a project. This broader understanding exists whether or not the colloquial expression ‘benefit-sharing’ is used. This makes it hard to locate all historical literature. Cernea (1995) stated that the idea of sharing project benefits with people being resettled by a project was well established by the mid-1980s, whereas Price et al. (2020) date it from the late 1970s.

A problem, however, is that there is no singular definition or understanding of the concept, and it is clear that it has different meanings across the various discourses in which it is used (Dauda & Dierickx, 2013; Morgera, 2016). For example, the expression is related to the international legal principle of the ‘fair and equitable sharing of benefits’ (or sometimes only the ‘equitable sharing of benefits’), which is present in many international conventions, including: the 1979 United Nations Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and other Celestial Bodies; the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea; and the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity. The sharing of benefits was also a normal part of water catchment planning, where it referred to the notion that there should be a fair and equitable distribution of benefits (e.g. water entitlements for irrigation or hydroelectricity) across the different stakeholders (typically states) who have an interest in a particular catchment (Hansson & Reves, 1982; Dombrowsky et al., 2014), including upstream and downstream users. The notion of benefit-sharing is also present in medical research, where it relates to the idea that the participants in medical research (e.g. the donors of genes, human tissue, blood, stem cells, etc.) should also benefit from that research (Schroeder & Lucas, 2013; Dauda et al., 2016). Often, the international principle referred to sharing between countries, regions, and only sometimes to sharing between different stakeholder groups within a country, and thus it does not have the same meaning as intended in this chapter, which primarily refers to the provision of benefits to project-affected peoples.

Of historical interest is the use of the benefit-sharing concept in the context of the ‘new international economic order’, which followed the end of colonialism in the 1960s and 1970s. Essentially, newly independent countries (former colonies) found that they were trapped by unfavourable trade arrangements and that, despite the end of political colonisation, they were still gripped by economic colonisation (Greenwald, 1976). The benefits of resource extraction (i.e. mining, oil, and gas) tended to go to the multinational companies (and the countries these companies were based in) rather than to the host countries, which typically only experienced the negative impacts of the operations, a concept called the resource curse (Auty, 1993; Ogwang et al., 2019). Benefit-sharing was a concept used in the 1960s and 1970s (and also subsequently) to refer to the notion that developing countries (at the nation state level) should receive more of the benefits from resource extraction (Greenwald, 1976).

As indicated earlier in this chapter, the most likely first use of benefit-sharing as a concept referring to project-affected communities or host communities was in discussions in the

World Bank, especially in the context of development-induced displacement and resettlement. Another early use of the concept with reference to project-affected communities was in the work of the World Commission on Dams, which was established by the World Bank together with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Benefit-sharing is much present in the final report (WCD, 2000), and was also much discussed in the knowledge-base used by the Commission in the preparation of their final report. Subsequent outputs by the Dams and Development Project (DDP, 2007) have also emphasised benefit-sharing.

‘ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING’ AND THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Although the text of the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity did not specifically use the expression ‘benefit-sharing’, the three objectives of the Convention were: the conservation of biological diversity; the sustainable use of biological diversity; and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilisation of genetic resources. Genetic resources implies the potential economic value of plants and animals (which are often on the lands of Indigenous peoples). The great potential for profit from exploiting genetic resources has led to bioprospecting (the act of searching for such resources) and biopiracy (the appropriation of these resources). Amidst much concern and after much negotiation, a set of guidelines (CBD Secretariat, 2002) and a protocol (CBD Secretariat, 2011) were developed about rights and responsibilities in relation to access and benefit-sharing in the context of the utilisation of genetic resources. Given the significant international interest in biodiversity, a considerable proportion of the literature that is identified by searching for ‘benefit-sharing’ is actually related to the Convention on Biological Diversity discourse on ‘access and benefit-sharing’ and bears little relation to project benefit-sharing as discussed in this chapter.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD Secretariat, 2004) also published the *Akwé: Kon Guidelines*, which are a set of guidelines about how environmental and social impact assessments should be conducted when a project will affect Indigenous communities. The language of ‘maximise benefits and minimise adverse impacts’ is very evident in these guidelines, as it is in the SIA discourse generally. The guidelines provide advice about how an SIA or EIA might be conducted in an effective way, including to enhance benefits.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND BENEFIT-SHARING

Benefit-sharing is something every project should do. The SIA process should normally consider opportunities for benefit-sharing, and make recommendations to the project about appropriate benefit-sharing arrangements that might be considered. However, any firm plans would need to be negotiated with the local community and emerge from a participatory process. While the community profile and social baseline developed as part of the SIA would also inform any benefit-sharing arrangements, developing an effective benefit-sharing strategy takes care, and probably should be done separate to the SIA process (Esteves & Vanclay, 2009).

PROBLEMS WITH BENEFIT-SHARING

Some people have argued that benefit-sharing is a threat to the rights of communities, especially Indigenous communities, because it acts as an inducement or enticement for them to accept projects that are not necessarily in their interests (Altman, 2009; Morgera, 2019). The flow of benefits in a community is not always equal, and the community discussion of the benefit-sharing arrangements and/or about support for the project can create division and conflict within communities. In a situation of existing conflict, the provision of benefits to one group over another group can exacerbate conflict (International Alert, 2018). There can also be disparity between resource-rich regions and other regions within a country, leading to inequality and conflict within a nation. There can also be corruption and political interference in the implementation of benefit-sharing arrangements. Also, considerable elite capture can occur.

A major issue is the lack of gender consideration in how benefits are distributed. If payments are only made to male heads of households, or to the registered owners of land (who are typically men), then women are left out. If community engagement processes to discuss possible ways of providing assistance only include men, then potential arrangements to consider women are not considered. The provision of benefits may increase gender-based violence (Social Development Direct, 2020).

Owen et al. (2021) have argued that affected communities experience considerable hidden costs, including opportunity costs, that are not fully considered in economic analyses about projects. They argue that benefit-sharing and shared value are misnomers because they presume that the benefits provided by a project are 'cost free' to the community. The reality is that, even where a project provides benefits, a full assessment of the overall picture may reveal that communities are still made worse off by the project, despite the alleged benefit-sharing. Furthermore, many writers (including O'Faircheallaigh, 2010; Vanclay, 2017b; Ijabadeniyi & Vanclay, 2020; Vanclay, 2020) suggest that the benefits of projects are often misrepresented or exaggerated, and that they are often little more than greenwashing.

Benefit-sharing schemes (especially when there is a social investment fund) may not always achieve their objectives. There can be a mismanagement of funds, with wastage, spending on ridiculous activities, etc. Sometimes, even when all intentions are good, a lack of understanding of the local cultural context may result in inappropriate decisions being made (Hanna et al., 2016). Inadequate planning and/or a lack of thinking about the sustainability of benefit-sharing projects may mean that services quickly deteriorate and may even cease working altogether. In all projects, it will be necessary to ensure that there is careful consideration about how ongoing maintenance will be provided. A further issue is that, too often, the activities done by companies are little more than the pet projects of some manager, rather than carefully considered programmes that meet the needs of local communities.

Any benefit-sharing scheme that results in significant increased wealth to local people will inevitably cause local inflation. This will mean that the value of the benefit is diminished. The inflation will also affect people who are non-beneficiaries, and thus further inequity is created. The benefit-sharing arrangements may lead to changes in people's livelihood and lifestyles, which may themselves cause considerable social impacts (Vanclay, 2002).

Another issue is that the benefit-sharing arrangements may create dependency of the local community on the project. This may be fine while the project continues, but this could be a risk in the future when the project closes or is put on hold during a commodity price downturn.

Finally, there are some higher-level issues created by benefit-sharing. Sometimes central governments do not want companies to support local communities. This can be related to issues around the consequences of companies usurping or supplanting or replacing the state. Or it can be related to the fact the private-sector companies may be overly generous and create new expectations by communities for what should be proved in public-sector projects. An issue too is that some private-sector benefit-sharing arrangements may impose burdens on the state, for example in relation to the provision of schools or hospitals. Benefit-sharing arrangements frequently pay for the hard costs (infrastructure, buildings), but rarely the soft costs (staff salaries, materials needed, consumables, etc.) (van der Ploeg et al., 2017; van der Ploeg & Vanclay, 2018). These issues with benefit-sharing should not be an argument that there should be no benefit-sharing. They only indicate that benefit-sharing is not a panacea, and that benefit-sharing schemes should be carefully considered, implemented, and managed.

CONCLUSION

Benefit-sharing has varying meanings in different discourses. However, in social performance and social impact assessment circles, it means any attempt to enhance the outcomes for local communities from projects. Thus, it includes a wide range of enhancement activities as well as various financial arrangements that might be implemented by a project to benefit people in host or nearby communities. Strictly speaking, benefit-sharing is not compensation or impact mitigation. To be a benefit, the arrangement must make people better off, and must be in addition to any compensation or impact mitigation to which they would be entitled by local law or international standards. Benefit-sharing and enhancement measures should be meaningful, and be carefully developed in negotiation with local communities. They should not be an empty philanthropic gesture, nor should they be insignificant or incompetently implemented so as to be ineffectual or fail to make a meaningful difference to local people.

Most international standards now advocate (or even require) that at least some attention is given to benefit-sharing and/or to the enhancement of outcomes experienced by project-affected communities. However, these standards are generally not clear about what this means in practice, and there is little evidence that adequate attention is given to benefit-sharing in project design or in the conduct or approval of Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs), even though most social performance practitioners would say that it should be considered. Therefore, there is a real need to change the culture and practice of project implementation companies so that they move beyond a focus that is only on project completion at minimal cost to one that properly considers the project context and how the project can add value to local communities. There is a large range of possible enhancement measures that could be implemented, most of which would make a huge difference to local communities, and some of which would be at very little cost to the project. Clearly, development finance institutions, impact investors, and social performance practitioners need to play a stronger role in encouraging greater commitment by project developers to benefit-sharing and enhancement.

A critical issue is the role of ESIA in the identification of possible enhancement measures. The reality is that most ESIA consultants do not devote much attention to enhancement and benefit-sharing, partly because the practice of ESIA has primarily been concerned with minimising harm, and because the role of ESIA has been seen as assisting the project to obtain

project approval (rather than to enhance the project). Even from an intellectual perspective, it is probably not appropriate to expect ESIA to specify actual enhancement or benefit-sharing mechanisms, because devising such mechanisms should be a carefully considered process done in close discussion with affected communities, and potentially negotiated after project approval, not something to be rushed through in a pre-approval impact assessment.

A further problem is that, while most ESIA typically contain a community profile and baseline data, which are often reasonable, in most projects there usually is far too little follow-up assessment to establish how people are actually affected by the project and how the community changes as a result of the project. Project-induced in-migration (influx) can mean that community profiles and baseline information quickly become out of date. Discussions about enhancement should be based on a more sophisticated understanding of the project and about what impacts will actually occur (including influx) than is available when the ESIA is done. Much more attention is needed in relation to the follow-up monitoring and adaptive management of social impacts. While the development of benefit-sharing arrangements should be a longer, more considered process than is possible during an ESIA process, nevertheless, the ESIA should inform the planning of benefit-sharing and enhancement measures.

The key point about benefit-sharing is that it is completely unacceptable for projects to render people worse off. It is also ethically reprehensible if people affected by projects are not also beneficiaries of the project. Projects need to try harder to improve outcomes experienced by local people and host communities.

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28. Local content in the context of social impact assessment and management

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INTRODUCTION

Social impact assessments (SIAs) are generally defined as the ‘processes of analysing, monitoring, and managing the intended and unintended social consequences, both positive and negative, of planned interventions (policies, programmes, plans, projects) and any social change processes invoked by those interventions’ (Vanclay, 2003, p. 6). Part of the potential positive consequences of investment projects is local content (Esteves & Vanclay, 2009; Esteves & Barclay, 2011). This includes local procurement, local employment, and investing in enterprise development. Governments emphasise local content because, in addition to investment projects contributing revenues to state coffers in the form of taxes and other fiscal contributions, they also expect that more corporate spend can be retained in the country through local content (Östenson, 2018). Local content is understood to boost economic activities through generating employment in the wider economy, and to stimulate economic diversification, industrial development, and technological advancements.

Because project-based SIA deals with impacts primarily *ex ante* (Vanclay et al., 2015), it can and should capture issues related to the planning of local content to ensure that there is an overall understanding of how local content may affect host communities and contribute to improving the relationship between projects and host communities. SIA provides insights on if and how the development of a project and its operation can leverage local content opportunities, as well as flagging structural constraints and cautioning against overtly optimistic expectations that local content will invariably create positive relationships with communities and other stakeholders. Caution is warranted when structural conditions limit opportunities for local procurement, local employment, and enterprise development, or where the ambitions of host governments to force local content give rise to socio-political risks, such as unproductive rent-seeking, nepotism, or corruption. The objective of this chapter is to discuss how local content can be embedded in project SIA.

There is no universal definition for ‘local content’. Several interpretations emphasise the additional value that a country gains when foreign companies source goods and services, including labour, from the national economy (Ado, 2013). Case studies on local content policies in countries exporting minerals have suggested that governments often pursue local content objectives aiming to increase the local benefits that host countries gain from requiring companies to invest in hiring and training a local labour force and procuring locally produced goods and services (OECD, 2017). However, it has been observed that unclear and unspecified regulatory requirements and the lack of local skills and supplier capabilities often create misalignment between government expectations, the mandatory requirements they put in place, and the ability or willingness of project proponents to comply with these requirements (Tordo et al., 2013). This chapter considers the critical issue that local content and associated

policies are typically conceptualised in narrow terms and fail to capture the broader impacts of investment projects on a country's economic and social development (Dietsche, 2018). This is especially the case in relation to the possibility of and effort needed to procure goods and services from local businesses, and the support needed to develop and strengthen the capacity of local enterprises and to improve the employment opportunities these enterprises offer to local communities.

We examine the cases of three countries where, to varying extents, narrowly conceptualised local content policies have been implemented. We discuss the challenges and opportunities for achieving the objectives associated with local content policies by critically assessing how they interact with other public policies and affect interactions between the public and private sectors. We also draw on examples of corporate-led initiatives that have sought to increase local procurement and develop local enterprises. Although these policies and initiatives focus on the mining sector, we believe that the insights gained apply more generally. We argue that, by reframing local procurement and enterprise development in broader terms, local content policies can be conceptualised to seize opportunities for local economic transformation. We draw this discussion back to project SIA, and consider the role and contribution SIA can make to supporting local procurement and enterprise development, thus enhancing benefits for local host communities.

GOVERNMENT LOCAL CONTENT POLICIES

Government policies on local content have been in place for many decades. Until the late 1980s, they were often part of sector policies. In the 1990s, when liberal market reforms were introduced, these policy measures were criticised for restrictively serving narrow government objectives and they were typically abolished when laws and regulations were revised to liberalise the resources sectors to attract foreign investors (Tordo et al., 2013). However, over the past decade or so, resource-rich countries have rediscovered and devised new local content policies (LCPs) to capture more of the value added generated by investment projects that exploit natural resources. It has become a trend to embed LCPs in legislation, regulation, and in contracts, and/or to develop separate LCPs. In recent years, renewed calls to boost specific economic activities have encouraged a proactive stance on LCPs (Dietsche, 2014). In this chapter, we illustrate this development by examining LCPs in three countries: Tanzania, Botswana, and Australia.

Tanzania

In the Tanzanian mining sector, numerous government stipulations have addressed local content, especially since 2010. But positive outcomes have been limited. The pursuit of local content objectives started with the 1979 Mining Act, which required that mining companies develop and implement local procurement plans. In the 1990s, this requirement was abandoned following a World Bank review of the country's mining policy in the context of liberalising the national economy. The resulting 1998 Mining Act allowed 100 per cent foreign ownership of investment and unrestricted repatriation of profits. The Act also offered guarantees against nationalisation, a low royalty rate of 3 per cent, and provided various other fiscal incentives to companies, such as tax and import duty exemptions (Makene et al., 2012). The only local

content stipulation that remained in the 1998 Act concerned the employment and training of Tanzanians as part of special mining licence conditions. This stipulation was already embedded in the 1979 Act. The revised 2010 Mining Act restored some local content stipulations that were in the 1979 Act (Tanzania, 1979, 1998, 2010). For example, it referred to procurement from within Tanzania, and required companies to include in their licence application a ‘succession plan on expatriate employees as required by the Employment and Labour Relations Act’ (Tanzania, 2010, p. 46) – meaning that companies needed to put in place a plan to replace expatriate employees by local labour over time.

Amendments to the mining legislative framework since 2017 have comprised: (1) the Written Laws (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 2017 or ‘Amendments Act’; (2) the Natural Wealth and Resources (Permanent Sovereignty) Act 2017 or ‘Sovereignty Act’; and (3) the Natural Wealth and Resources (Review and Re-Negotiation of Unconscionable Terms) Act 2017 or ‘Contract Review Act’ (Woodroffe et al., 2017). These regulatory amendments contain detailed stipulation relating to local content and aim to encourage beneficiation (i.e. further industrial processing of mineral ores) in the country.

At one level, these most recent stipulations can be viewed as constituting a significant improvement in the promotion of local content in Tanzania, especially as they entail specific targets with associated timelines for achieving local procurement of goods and services, recruitment, training of Tanzanians, and in making mandatory investments in research and development related to technology and information systems. Furthermore, restructuring of the Ministry of Minerals and establishing a Mining Commission with a Local Content Committee (among other committees) can be seen as a critical condition for ensuring that relevant government functions coordinate amongst themselves to promote local content.

Whether these government-driven legal and regulatory local content measures are effective and deliver their intended impact remains to be seen. One caveat is that not all local content stipulations are aligned with other public policies, for example trade policy. Another is that Tanzania holds a particularly poor record of successfully pursuing industrial policy objectives and is seen to have failed in the past (Gray, 2013). Another issue is the deep-rooted monopolisation of economic opportunities around the dominant ruling party, Chama Cha Mapinduzi or CCM (Hansen et al., 2016). The concern is that this poor record continues to allow exclusive elites to capture the rents that local content requirements create. For example, one firm providing catering services to four large-scale mining companies is owned by a CCM politician (Lange & Kinyondo, 2016). Similarly, the owner of a large Caterpillar branch supplying heavy machinery and trucks to the mining sector is also a CCM politician (Lange & Kinyondo, 2016).

Botswana

The legal and regulatory framework for Botswana’s mining sector differs from that of Tanzania in that the country’s Mines and Minerals Act 1999 (Botswana, 1999) does not mention the term ‘local content’. However, the Act provides for holders of a mining licence to give preference ‘to the maximum extent possible to materials and products made in Botswana; and service agencies located in Botswana and owned by Botswana citizens or bodies corporate established under the Companies Act’ (Art. 12.1). The Act also requires companies to ‘give preference in employment to citizens of Botswana to the maximum extent possible’ and provide training programmes for employees (Art. 12.2&3). Moreover, the Act includes a stipulation on localisation based on the reservation of industrial mining permits exclusively to

citizens of Botswana. Exemptions may only be granted by the Minister if a permit application is ‘in the public interest or for specific works and minerals [that] will not be sold or disposed of for profit’ (Art. 53.1&2). The Minister can also terminate a permit if ownership were to change hands to a non-citizen.

Even though the Act only holds rather soft stipulations on local content, local procurement, and the employment and training of citizens, the Botswana government has been taking a proactive stance on delivery. First, the country turned attention to local value addition by adopting a Diamond Beneficiation Policy in 2005 to encourage the processing of diamonds in Botswana (World Bank, 2014). It also established the Diamond Trading Company Botswana in 2008 to help develop a secondary diamond industry through downstream activities including manufacturing and retailing diamond jewellery (Sekwati, 2010; Koitsiwe & Adachi, 2016). To pursue this objective, the authorities set up the Debswana Diamond Company, a joint venture between the government and De Beers where each holds an equity share of 50 per cent. Debswana has achieved significant beneficiation in Botswana, including sorting, cutting, polishing, and marketing (Fessehaie et al., 2016).

The Botswana government also implemented an Economic Diversification Drive (EDD) Strategy 2011–2016 supported by medium- and long-term plans (Botswana, 2011). These efforts were aimed at developing priority sectors and diversifying the economy through: local content; technology development, adaptation, transfer, and innovation; management know-how; development of small, micro, medium enterprises (SMMEs); and promoting entrepreneurship (Botswana, 2011). Debswana’s role had been aligned with the EDD Strategy and the 2014 New Industrial Development Policy. Furthermore, the National Economic Diversification Council had been tasked with providing strategic guidance and monitoring and evaluation to ensure successful implementation of the EDD strategy. In 2012, a Citizen’s Economic Empowerment Policy (CEEP) was implemented (Botswana, 2012), including measures expected to contribute to an enabling business environment, development of human capital, and promotion of Botswana ownership, management, and participation in the economy. Despite this effort, the government took a conservative stance towards implementing the CEEP in full because it became concerned about raising costs for industry in the context of falling commodity prices in the mid-2010s (World Bank, 2016).

The results of the various measures and activities have been mixed and few local suppliers of goods and services have been developed. To address prevailing gaps in technical skills and technology, knowledge development efforts have been put in place through initiatives such as the Botswana Institute for Technology Research and Innovation in 2012, and the Botswana Innovation Hub in 2008 (Fessehaie et al., 2016). Skilled Botswana professionals have taken up high-level positions in the mining industry, and the government has generated significant revenue from the mining sector. However, this revenue has largely benefited government services and, to some extent, financial services rather than increasing productivity and nurturing technological change in other sectors, or increasing investment (Hillbom & Bolt, 2018). Various observers contend that while the Botswana economy has benefited from diamonds, this comes at the expense of high inequality and an undiversified economy.

Australia

Being a federation comprising state and territorial governments that maintain jurisdiction-specific policies, the Australian federal government steers local content in the mining industry based

on the Australian Industry Participation National Framework (AIP), which was jointly agreed between the federal and state governments (AIPNF, 2001). The AIP framework outlined the policy guidelines to pursue a consistent national-level approach to nurture participation by Australian industries in major projects in Australia and abroad (AIPNF, 2001). The framework was supported by the Australian Jobs Act 2013 (Australia, 2013) and the Australian Jobs (Australian Industry Participation) Rule 2014 (Australia, 2014). A provision requires investors with a major project threshold of above AU\$500 million to submit a draft Australian Industry Participation Plan (AIPP) to an AIP Authority for approval. This authority sets timelines and defines compliance measures for the implementation of these plans.

The Framework was underpinned by three principles that investors must incorporate in their AIPPs. These are: *full*, i.e., ‘Australian industry has the same opportunity afforded to other global supply chain partners to participate in all aspects of an investment project’; *fair*, i.e., ‘Australian industry is provided the same opportunity as global suppliers to compete on investment projects on an equal and transparent basis’; and *reasonable*, i.e., ‘tenders are free from non-market burdens that might rule out Australian industry and are structured in such a way as to provide Australian industries the opportunity to participate in investment projects’ (AIPNF, 2001, p. 3). Australian industry participation may take different forms, including ‘value adding to raw materials, manufacturing or construction activities and use of Australian service providers’ (AIPNF, 2001, p. 2).

In addition to these stipulations, the Australian federal government has encouraged strategic collaborations and alliances between state authorities and private sector investors to build industry capabilities, improve access to competitive infrastructure (hard and soft), encourage innovation and the uptake of technology and skills, and identify opportunities and challenges early on to address these where necessary (AIPNF, 2001). It has also encouraged specific initiatives in support of local businesses; for example, the A\$34 million *Buy Australian at Home and Abroad* campaign and associated sub-initiatives. This initiative aimed to develop and link Australian businesses with the resources sector by means of identifying capabilities and opportunities and fostering communication between relevant parties (Australia, 2011).

Another initiative has focused on the Mining, Equipment, Technology and Services (METS) sector and support programmes targeted at developing the capabilities of Australian businesses. For example, one of the METS-focused programmes involves a supply chain development programme implemented by the Resources and Engineering Skills Alliance, which delivers capacity building and market analysis activities (Weldegiorgis et al., 2017).

In summary, Australia’s approach to local content has sought to balance legal stipulations requiring AIPPs with collaborative public–private initiatives aimed at supporting local businesses and the labour force. Achieving such a balance has generally been critical to ensuring regulations support rather than impede efforts aimed at leveraging key industries, such as mining, for economic opportunities.

Overall Assessment of the Three Countries

The three cases exhibit the trend for governments to embed LCPs in legislation, regulation, and contracts. They demonstrate that, although aiming for the same objective, the three countries have pursued local content objectives in different ways in terms of policy design and implementation. More positively, Botswana, at least to some extent, and Australia more so, have complemented local content stipulations with a proactive public-sector approach (and

in Australia also involving the private sector) to developing factor inputs, in particular skills and technology. Nevertheless, all three countries have struggled to make significant headway in terms of building deeper linkages and transforming their economies away from resource dependence.

CORPORATE LOCAL PROCUREMENT AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

In parallel to governments setting legal and regulatory requirements on local content, companies have also been investing and setting internal local content strategies and target-driven implementation plans. They often develop such strategies and plans as part of local procurement programmes, but equally, they may link and/or embed such measures within their social performance, social investment, and other sustainability, shared value and/or social licence to operate activities. Hence, there already is some overlap with project-focused SIA work. Here, we discuss the challenges that government and corporate efforts have grappled with to increase local procurement and enterprise development. The aim is to frame such efforts as an opportunity for companies to contribute to broad-based economic transformation in the context of SIA-related activities.

Although not usually their primary focus, government LCPs do tend to speak to the development of local small and medium enterprises (SMEs) with the aim of enhancing local procurement. For example, the LCPs of Tanzania and Botswana mention an enabling environment for enterprise development, such as providing access to finance and technical support, and developing human capital, technology, and infrastructure. However, both countries have faced difficulties in overcoming systemic constraints associated with limited institutional capabilities and resources. This is because LCPs are often put together and enacted without consulting, engaging, or collaborating with private sector stakeholders from relevant industries. A review of LCPs in Ghana, Nigeria, Mozambique, and South Africa found that barriers to progressing local content included problems in policy coordination and integration, as well as mistrust between government and industry stakeholders (White, 2017). A specific example was the Enterprise Development Centre project in Ghana, a five-year government flagship programme established in 2013 to develop Ghanaian SMEs in the oil and gas sector. The programme collapsed two years short of its initial five-year life span. This was attributed to a mismatch in stakeholders' understandings of the strategy and their interests in the Centre, as well as disagreement on whether to take a collaborative approach towards adding value locally (Ablo, 2020). In the absence of major upfront investment in the development of the technical capacity of Ghanaian businesses, many local business partners simply ended up supplying the mining industry with imported goods, thus adding little value to the economy (Ananeh-Frempong, 2022).

Some progress has been made where governments have collaborated with the private sector to develop SMEs. In the case of Tanzania, the 2010 Mining Act's mention of local content gave impetus for a skills development initiative the government established in collaboration with the mining companies Acacia and Geita Gold Mine. This initiative established an Integrated Mine Technical Training Programme (IMTT) at the Arusha Technical College and the Moshi Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) (Lange & Kinyondo, 2016). A reported 90 per cent of graduates from IMTT's three-year programme were employed in

the sponsoring companies by 2013. In 2015, the Moshi VETA College established a Centre of Excellence with support from the Australian Government, with the aim to develop local skills (DFAT, 2015). In the short term, governance issues, including misalignment of government mandate and functions, and accountability, have hampered VETA from providing industry-specific, applied skills training (Andreoni, 2018). But challenges of this type can be overcome. Another multistakeholder collaboration initiative has been the E4D/SOGA programme that the German agency GIZ has been implementing in Eastern Africa since 2015 to develop skills that match industry demand (Dietsche, 2020). In essence, although collaborative initiatives still face various practical problems, they appear to yield more positive outcome than government-only initiatives.

In Australia, outcomes in terms of enterprise development and procurement have been generally positive. Based on the Australian Industry Participation National Framework, the Australian government has supported various initiatives aimed at identifying capabilities and developing and linking businesses with the resources sector. The Minerals Council of Australia has also supported businesses by connecting them with mining companies and providing finance, sponsorships, and awards (Australia, 2018). The successes of the mining sector have been essential in bridging the divide between the public and private sectors, in facilitating the development of businesses and their linkages with mining and other industries, and in the development of a conducive regulatory environment. Indigenous Land Use Agreements have provided another instrument for local employment, training, and business support targeted at Australia's Indigenous peoples. These agreements are usually concluded between traditional owners and mining companies and are context specific, but based on the Australian Native Title Legislation.

Despite these efforts, recent parliamentary hearings have revealed some challenges with local procurement policies and practices. Various industry groups, including local businesses and councils, have complained to the *Inquiry into how the mining sector can support businesses in regional economies* (Australia, 2018) that (modified): (i) most businesses are SMEs and do not receive procurement directly from the mining companies, which prefer to outsource their risk by working with major (Tier 1) contractors; (ii) for SMEs, standards including tendering are too hard to comply with; (iii) local and regional businesses miss out on opportunities because procurement offices are located in cities and thus often not convenient for easy communication; (iv) contracts with mining companies are too short and/or take too long to establish, which causes uncertainty for SMEs; (v) limited local capacity in workmanship and technical, work health and safety, financial and insurance capacity to deliver; and (vi) lack of banking and financial services, reliable transport, energy and communication infrastructure. Furthermore, industry groups have emphasised the loose definition of what mining companies and the AIPP consider to be a 'local' business.

These challenges apply more generally. Constructive and effective public-private sector collaboration is crucial for successful enterprise development and local procurement. It is important that the companies that lead large-scale investment projects actively participate in and guide local procurement and enterprise development efforts because they hold relevant knowledge, especially, in identifying and securing the industry demand that can be sourced locally. Their active involvement raises the level of responsibility they share with government

authorities in working with local SMEs to, not only source inputs, but also to train business skills and enable knowledge transfer. Also, industry partners feel a sense of ownership if they are engaged as an active rather than passive stakeholder. They will see and make a business case for working with local businesses through initiatives on enterprise development that involve providing financial and technical support and establishing long-term business relationships. Box 28.1 and Box 28.2 present examples of mining companies that have demonstrated leadership in successful enterprise development initiatives.

BOX 28.1 ANGLO ZIMELE ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE, SOUTH AFRICA

Established in 1989, well before any local content requirement in South Africa, Zimele is an enterprise development and empowerment initiative comprising six funds:

- Supply Chain Fund – This helps Anglo’s procurement departments find appropriate SMEs and link them with the appropriate commodity teams. Finance of up to R5 million (about USD 300K) per project and business guidance, skills transfer, and business opportunities.
- Anglo American SEFA mining fund – A joint initiative between Anglo’s South African operations and SEFA (Small Enterprise Development Fund), formerly Khula Enterprise Finance, which is owned by the government and promotes SME development. Finance of up to R30 million (about USD 2 million) per project and technical support.
- Community fund – Managed through a network of small business hubs around the country providing funding, training, and skills development for entrepreneurs and SME owners. Finance of up to R2 million (USD 110K) per project and business training.
- Green fund – Targets investment opportunities that mitigate carbon, reduce energy, and water consumption, and improve waste and emissions management. Finance of up to R10 million (USD 600k) per project and business guidance, skills transfer, and business opportunities.
- Sebenza fund – Created after Anglo American and the National Treasury each contributed R250 million (USD 15 million) as start-up funding. Operates with business development hubs across South Africa providing entrepreneurs with access to affordable finance and on-going business training and mentorship.
- Godisa fund – A joint initiative between Anglo American, Transnet, and SEFA to promote enterprise development, business growth and job creation amongst black-owned Transnet suppliers in rail manufacturing, freight logistics, and related services.
- A new ‘2018 and beyond strategy’ for Zimele focuses on mentoring young people and developing the capacity of SMMEs, with access to funding as a second step.

Sources: AfDB (2016); AngloAmerican (2017).

BOX 28.2 BHP LOCAL BUYING PROGRAMME, AUSTRALIA

This programme involves BHP Mitsubishi Alliance (BMA) and BHP Mitsui Coal (BMC) with Community Resourcing (C-Res). It was established in 2012 to build capability and capacity across the local supply chain and boost regional economic development to supply goods and services to BHP, BMA, and BMC operations.

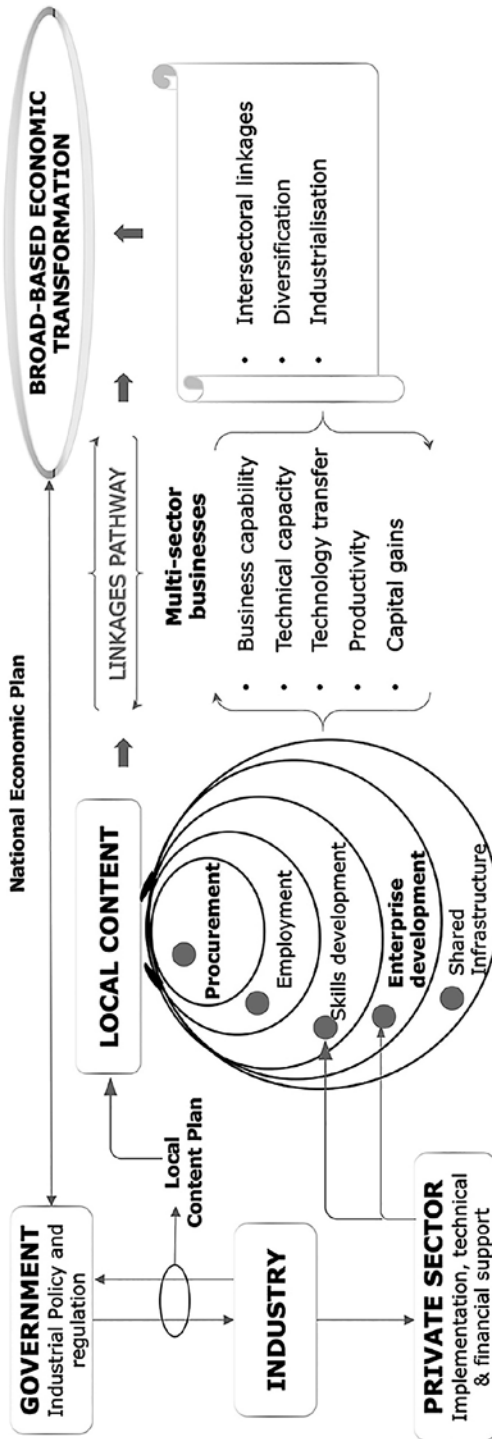
- Provides a competitive tender process with reduced payment terms averaging 11 days.
- BHP partnered with C-Res, which directly manages all transactional activities through the Programme, while also providing ongoing support, engagement and mentoring of registered local suppliers.
- Programme recorded actual spend of around A\$760 million (approx. USD 500 million), approved 54,918 work instructions, and 1,473 approved suppliers.
- The programme is, however, limited to only small businesses with less than 20 employees and is only available to businesses directly contracting with BHP and its subsidiaries.

Sources: C-Res (2022); BHP (2018); Australia (2018).

RATIONALE FOR LOCAL PROCUREMENT AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

The practical manifestations of government LCPs and company-led local content initiatives discussed above provide useful observations on the opportunities and challenges for developing broader economic linkages leveraging a specific economic sector. Developing the capacities of local enterprises and ensuring their access to procurement opportunities in large-scale investment projects can potentially strengthen their technical and technological capabilities and enable them to grow and diversify. For this to materialise, local content policies and initiatives need to be framed with an objective of developing linkages between sectors for a diversified economy rather than focusing solely on supplying inputs to a specific sector. The risk of merely assuming that local procurement will somehow and at some point contribute to inter-sectoral linkages is that too little attention is paid to the strategic policy and resources planning that is needed to ensure the broad-based development of different industries. To avoid this risk, the development of local enterprises and procurement can be conceptualised with a broader rationale that strives to help transform an economy, rather than merely supplying inputs to a specific sector.

Figure 28.1 demonstrates how such a conceptualisation of local content can be approached. The first area that needs to be addressed is the definition of local content, in terms of not only geographic scope, but also the areas of ‘content’ it covers. Governments and companies need to have a common understanding and to clearly state what local content is about. Does local content also speak to capacity development? And if so, does this include the capacity of businesses and of the labour force? What about transferring technology? As these issues are often vaguely understood, Figure 28.1 paints a fuller picture of local content, including local procurement and enterprise development, and the linkage pathways towards economic transformation.



Source: The authors.

Figure 28.1 Conceptual framework of local content through procurement and enterprise development

The conceptual framework in Figure 28.1 juxtaposes the various local content components next to a comprehensive and holistic view of the local economy and its current and potential capabilities. It shows that LCPs should be viewed as part and parcel of more general economic and industrial policies, rather than a policy area that is separate and distinct from these. This is in line with the general view expressed by multistakeholder groups that LCPs need to be anchored and embedded within the broader remit of industrial policies (Weldegiorgis et al., 2022).

This conceptualisation treats LCPs within the context of national industrial policy that is aligned with a country's national economic strategy and consistent with policies for other sectors. Such a framing helps put in place a local content policy and legal stipulations that are coordinated with broader economic transformation objectives, including the more general objective of providing an enabling environment for enterprise development. Such a framing within national economic and industrial policy also opens a conducive environment for active collaboration with actors in targeted industrial sectors, such as mining, to shape the regulatory framework in line with the country's specific economic context, industry demands, and procurement possibilities.

From the perspective of the private sector, the government's ambition to ensure a coherent economic and industrial policy environment becomes an incentive to collaborate with public authorities and SMEs to encourage and support local procurement and enterprise development. Joint efforts contribute to the development of local enterprises that become more productive, adopt innovative technologies, and gain financial strength as they become better suppliers. They can also become part of a process to embark upon building inter-sectoral linkages as a pathway for broader-based economic transformation.

CAPTURING LOCAL PROCUREMENT AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AS PART OF SIA

Apart from mitigating and managing social risks, a fundamental feature of social impact management is to seize opportunities to enhance benefits for host communities (see Chapter 27). A significant potential benefit from investment projects is considered to lie in the procurement of goods and services from the host community, if such opportunities can be effectively exploited, especially from a long-term perspective; for example, recurring supply and maintenance activities (Geipel, 2017). If this potential can be harnessed within the local content framework conceptualised in Figure 28.1, the impact on local economic transformation could be significant. Of course, this potential opportunity is a lot more complex to bring about in practice than the theory suggests, and it requires ongoing multidimensional and collaborative efforts and resources dedicated to this aim. SIA can assist by providing the baseline economic, social, and political information needed to develop local procurement and enterprise development strategies and implementation plans consistent with the framework presented in this chapter.

Local content has implications for how community and/or social benefits are understood by project proponents, government authorities, and other key stakeholders. Esteves and Vanclay (2009) noted that the extent to which companies are willing to undertake social investment has historically been limited to communities in and around a project area. Typically, this community-based approach restricts development benefits to the confines of the project area,

and it risks losing sight of broader national economic objectives and the public goods and services that are required to be provided by public authorities to support local economic and social development. The role of the public sector includes ensuring an enabling environment built on proactive partnerships that allow for comprehensive strategising, planning and implementation, and using feedback, observations, and experiences to improve policies.

The difficult task for host governments is to take a leading role in developing industrial policies and institutions that can leverage project-based local content and enterprise development for economic transformation. Furthermore, governments should work closely with companies and the local private sector, starting at the inception of projects, to design and implement a host community-focused ‘local content strategy’ and a ‘local content plan’ that align with the broader national economic transformation strategy (see Figure 28.1). Such partnerships seek to bring about synergies between corporate efforts and public policies. Moreover, it is critical that such partnerships do not get caught up in political settlements that encourage nepotism and favouritism between political and economic elites. The formidable challenge is to encourage collaboration while adequately controlling elite capture.

The potential result of such a broadly scoped approach, bringing together the public and private sectors, is the development of local enterprises, skills, and technology that benefit from supplying goods and services, not only to the sector in question, but also to other sectors. This would also constitute an opportunity to contribute to the diversification of the local economy. Within the economic transformation framework for developing local enterprises and procurement, SIA can play a positive role in laying the groundwork for conducting a more detailed and comprehensive economic baseline study aimed at studying the local economy and identifying local businesses to determine local supplier capability and to assess the potential for building linkages and leveraging multiplier effects (Vanclay et al., 2015).

Drawing on such baseline work, companies can make efforts to specify the goods and services that can already or could potentially be procured locally, if appropriate interventions and investments in local SMEs and human capital were made. This information could be laid out in phases aligning with the anticipated increase in locally available goods and services as local enterprises gradually develop and become competitive suppliers. Companies may also play a leading role in supporting the development of enterprises. The Anglo Zimele model (Box 28.1) showed that a private sector-led approach can result in a successful incubation of enterprises that are nurtured through ongoing business skills training and mentorship, financial support, and knowledge of the mining industry’s services and health and safety standards (AfDB, 2016). Enterprise development initiatives can be implemented by partners who can provide the specific expertise needed. The E4D/SOGA programme showed that integrated and collaborative efforts involving the public and private sector are possible, and that joint programmes can serve to better understand and support the labour market through improved training, internships and job placements, and enhance the absorption of such labour in and around large-scale investment projects (Dietsche, 2020).

CONCLUSION

This chapter explained how the topic of local content should be embedded in project SIAs. Local procurement and associated enterprise development have often taken centre stage in government policies aimed at maximising the economic benefits of large-scale investments.

Poorly designed and implemented local content policies and initiatives have failed to meet community expectations, particularly in developing countries. At a macroeconomic scale, narrowly conceptualised local content objectives and policies have limited effects on broader economic linkages between targeted industries and the rest of the economy. As such, the chapter emphasises the importance of re-examining the dominant conceptualisation of local procurement and enterprise development from a broader socioeconomic perspective.

We argued that local content policies can be conceptualised partly by reframing local procurement and enterprise development in broader terms. While local content policies need to be treated as part of a broad national industrial policy that encompasses all economic sectors, so must the approach to local procurement and enterprise development be framed within a broader economic transformation rationale, beyond narrow, short-term supply chain activities. We propose that project-focused social impact assessments can embrace this perspective by providing insights and analysis that support local procurement and enterprise development efforts that are grounded in the local context, while also leveraging the presence of investment projects for the benefit of transforming local economies in host communities. SIA can play a positive role in contributing comprehensive baseline assessments that help identify transformative linkage pathways and feed into developing local content plans.

The development of an economic baseline within the conceptualised local content framework can be a complex process, and the intended long-term socioeconomic impact may not be easily understood by communities. This could lead to increased community demand for preferential treatment causing social unrest and potential impact on investment projects. Economic baseline development, therefore, needs to incorporate a strategy to manage such expectations, which is why proactive public–private sector partnerships could help respond to community demands. Such partnerships, with the inclusion of community representatives, could set the scene with active engagement of communities to co-create local content plans that utilise existing local business capabilities and develop businesses that meet short- and long-term demands. This could instil a sense of community ownership, which will increase shared understanding and responsibility, thus reducing social tensions. Local enterprise development and procurement are ultimately part of social expectations and concerns, and their treatment within SIA should be considered by using a broader framework, such as proposed in this chapter. While this chapter briefly examined local content experiences initiated by governments and companies to propose a reframed local content approach within SIA, future research might consider a deeper analysis based on more country cases to understand how such a framework might be applied in practice.

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PART VI

METHODS AND TOOLS FOR SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT

29. Social research methods for project social impact assessment

Sheridan Coakes and Jessica Anagnostaras

INTRODUCTION

Social Impact Assessment (SIA) provides the opportunity to publicly demonstrate the value of social science in project planning and assessment processes and is a critical input for planning systems to assess whether projects are acceptable to the public. However, with the social aspects of development often being subsumed under environmental impact assessment (EIA), SIA has struggled to gain a strong foothold in project planning and decision-making. Munday (2021) found that the social, cultural, and participative aspects of regulatory and proponent EIA documents have rarely drawn on sound scoping, good social science, and public input to define material impacts; and furthermore, few incorporate the narratives of affected communities or adequately refer to the vast body of literature and case studies that exist and can be used to provide a sophisticated analysis of likely social impacts.

To facilitate greater rigour in SIA and engagement practices, SIA practitioners use their social research origins and implement effective social research methodology. While the application of quantitative social research approaches has resonated strongly with certain professionals in project teams, e.g., engineers, given the greater perceived alignment with traditional physical science approaches, conversely professionals trained in the social sciences are aware of a vast range of social research methods that can be used to identify, explore, describe, understand, explain, evaluate, and predict social phenomena involving human behaviour. This chapter provides a snapshot of the social research methods that may be useful to apply in project SIA.

SOCIAL SCIENCE AND SOCIAL RESEARCH APPROACHES

There is clear consensus that the social sciences are important in increasing our understanding of people and society, and of the way we act and influence the world around us. The social sciences provide insights into the great diversity of beliefs and patterns of behaviour that characterise human societies. These insights can assist in addressing the many complex wicked problems that require a deeper understanding of the stakeholders involved and their varied perspectives. Covering an array of disciplines, the social sciences bridge the vital gap between the people making the decisions and those affected by them.

Social science research takes many forms, including basic or pure research that can be explanatory, exploratory, and/or descriptive in nature; and applied or empirical research that provides solutions to real-life problems, and which relies on verifiable evidence to obtain robust data. This could be in numerical form (quantitative), or information that is more subjective and based on what is seen and heard in a social setting (qualitative). Social research

can use primary and/or secondary data. Primary social research involves data gathering using surveys, interviews, observations, ethnography, case studies, and so forth. Secondary research focuses on analysing and drawing conclusions from data that already exists, such as from documents, reports, plans, media sources, historical accounts, and existing social indicators and datasets.

While positivist applications of social science have been instrumental in promoting quantitative and numerical analyses, these analyses have been less helpful in solving the trickier problems presented by the social world. A people-centred approach, where qualitative and insightful research tells a powerful story about how a community's values, lifestyles, livelihoods, vulnerability, resilience, wellbeing, and social fabric will be affected by development, provides deeper insights into the lived experiences of affected communities, and represents a twenty-first-century model of impact assessment (Munday, 2021). Such a view lends itself to an interpretive approach to acquiring knowledge and understanding the social world (Leavy, 2020). At the junction of positivist and interpretive paradigms is critical reasoning, which recognises both the existence of a natural order in social events as well as the influence of discourse (Ijabadeniyi & Vanclay, 2020), while asserting that this natural order cannot be detected only by observing the pattern of events, but can only be discovered through a process of interpretation (Walliman, 2016).

Within an SIA context, social research – i.e., the analysis of primary and secondary data sources and the use of quantitative and qualitative methods – is critical to weave together a comprehensive understanding of individuals and communities, including: their narratives; values; needs; aspirations for the future; issues and concerns in relation to the planned intervention (policies, plans, programmes, and projects); and their ideas and strategies for responding to, managing, and monitoring social impacts. The application of social research in SIA adds tremendous value: in facilitating improved understanding of human behaviour, its causes and consequences; in explaining societal changes; in acknowledging that people play a role in the research process; in applying particular methods for collecting and analysing data on the basis of appropriateness to address the research question/problem (in some cases, adapting and devising new methods to address these questions); and in building a case for the validity of social impact conclusions.

SOCIAL RESEARCH METHODS RELEVANT TO SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The types of social research methods that are commonly utilised in SIA are listed in Table 29.1. This list is not intended to be exhaustive. Typically, multiple methods are used at the same time. This compilation demonstrates that a variety of social research methods can be utilised across all phases of SIA. For instance, secondary data review and analysis may be particularly helpful in the profiling phase of an SIA programme, where the practitioner is wanting to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the social context and locality where a project is located. However, such review will also be helpful in identifying previous impacts associated with development or change at the community level and in understanding community issues, needs and aspirations. For more details on the specific methods, please refer to any of the many textbooks on social research methods (e.g., Walliman, 2016; Ragin & Amoroso, 2018).

Table 29.1 *Social research methods potentially useful in project social impact assessment*

Method category	Specific social research methods under each category
Surveys	Questionnaires Stakeholder/community interviews Key informant/expert interviews Telephone surveys Intercept interviews Q-methodology / Card sorting
Fieldwork	Observation Participant observation Ethnography (see Chapter 30) Case studies Life and oral histories/narratives Participatory action research Participatory rural appraisal
Secondary data review and analysis	Content analysis Document analysis (e.g., strategic plans, reports, assessment studies) Historical research Media review and analysis Literature reviews
Group processes (small to large groups)	Stakeholder and community focus groups Participatory workshops Collaborative/interactive community forums Multi-stakeholder or village exchange workshops Simulation games Nominal group technique Delphi method World Café Deliberative dialogues Future backcasting Synthesis wall (to collate and afford group analysis of workshop outcomes) Counterfactual thought experiments Multi-criteria analysis
Digital methods	Online surveys (e.g., by distributing QR codes) Vox Pops (short video clips taken from interviews) Social network analysis Social media analysis Systems diagrams
Spatial mapping and visualisation methods	Stakeholder mapping and network analysis Community values mapping Photovoice and photo elicitation techniques Issues and indicator mapping Web-based research and engagement platforms, e.g., Social Pinpoint Interconnectivity analysis Change mapping Transition journey Seasonal activity calendars Auto-appraisal techniques Institutional mapping

Note: This list does not include community engagement strategies that are primarily intended to increase community awareness or promote dialogue and agreement-making rather than collection of data.

Source: The authors, based on their experience.

Fieldwork and survey-based methods are commonly undertaken in the scoping phase of an SIA to identify community perspectives of the changes that may be associated with a project and to identify strategies that may be explored to manage impacts and enhance benefits. Ethnographic methods may also be useful in this phase to understand how stakeholders interact with their social environment for personal/private or recreational uses, for work purposes, and to identify key community values associated with the area. In the impact evaluation and management phases, group processes may be employed to involve stakeholders in evaluating the significance of social impacts associated with the planned change (from their perspectives), and to further explore what impact management strategies need to be in place to mitigate project impacts and enhance project benefits.

Spatial methods provide a means to better understand the change in a geographic or geopolitical sense, providing a further level of analysis of social impacts that may be specific to a particular region or location. This is particularly the case with visualisation methods that provide clarity around the nature of the change, types of impacts, likely experiences, and how the changes may intersect with one another, forming a potential cumulative effect. The types of social data collected vary, with some methods, such as participant observation or ethnography, producing qualitative data, and other methods, including surveys or semi-structured interviews, yielding quantitative data, or a mixture of both. Mixed-method approaches, and triangulation, involve the use of quantitative and qualitative methods, and multiple sources of data and perspectives.

The use of mixed-method approaches is common in SIA practice, with the potential strengths of qualitative and quantitative methods being used, not only to enhance the validity and credibility of findings and outcomes, but also to gain a deeper and wider understanding (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). For example, a comprehensive understanding of the social locality where a project is located may be gained through secondary data review and quantitative analysis of relevant social datasets and indicators, e.g., census data and health data. Such data may be complemented by primary qualitative data collection through interviews with key stakeholders to obtain a firsthand, in-depth understanding of individual, group, and community perceptions, and people's responses to previous interventions.

Typically, the practitioners themselves have to decide which method to use, although this is influenced by a variety of considerations. SIA experts need to ensure that the methodology to be applied has been developed with social science rigour and is appropriately tailored to the particularities of the project context. Druckman and Donohue (2020) suggested that we are experiencing an era of innovation in social research methods, with much more attention to methods such as linear models, mixed methods, systems frameworks, machine learning, and new approaches to fieldwork. These new technologies have expanded the reach of quantitative methods, while also increasing the efficiency of data collection and analyses performed by qualitative researchers, and potentially making research findings more relevant to the communities being researched. This innovation has implications for SIA, especially in terms of ethical research considerations (Vanclay et al., 2013) and in increasing the relevance of outcomes to those participating in SIA programmes. There is also greater appreciation of co-design – a methodology for actively engaging the broad range of people directly involved in an issue, place, or process in the design and implementation of the research to intentionally create solutions, innovations, and improvements that address their problems and enhance opportunities for them (Burkett, 2017).

Participatory approaches to SIA seek to maximise stakeholder involvement, perspectives, and insights in the research process to achieve improved social outcomes that closely align with community values, needs, and aspirations. Consideration of the following issues will assist SIA practitioners in methodological design and in the selection of appropriate participatory social research methods:

- Understanding the wide range of stakeholder groups that may have an interest in a project and/or potentially be affected by a project, such as through stakeholder identification exercises and relationship and network mapping (see Chapter 19). While it is rarely possible to include everybody or everything in social research, how participants are selected is crucial to the reliability, validity, and legitimacy of the conclusions of SIA research.
- Comprehension of the social structures and networks (both formal and informal) that may exist within a geographical community, or within communities of interest, including any relations and dynamics regarding gender, sexuality, class, age, ethnicity, politics, and the intersectionality of these factors.
- Identification of existing means of participation and involvement in community/public life, utilising these mechanisms where relevant.
- The nature of response or reception to other nearby projects/consultation processes in the recent past, as well as identification of any known preferences for specific consultation methods by the different stakeholder groups.
- Understanding of community demographics and characteristics, including any vulnerabilities, such as literacy rates, levels of access to the internet, relative remoteness, as well as the distribution of labour between differing members of household units and community structures.

Within the range of social research methods that are available to use within project SIA are many creative social research methods, including some that adopt mediums such as art, sculpture, photography, and/or video. For example, *photovoice* is a form of visual ethnography that has been used in SIA to invite participants to represent their communities or their points of view through the medium of photography. Photographs are taken by participants in response to particular social research questions, e.g., what do you value most about living in your community?, or what impacts are you currently experiencing? The photographs are used in discussions or interviews to generate narratives, which are analysed. Sometimes, the photos are shared with the broader community in an exhibition or in a photographic book. *Vox pops* are short video clips taken from intercept interviews with members of the community to investigate public opinion. *Vox pops* have been utilised in SIAs to capture the voices of specific groups in relation to project development, e.g., youth, Indigenous groups. They are very effective in enabling project staff to comprehend the experiences of the affected community.

The use of *participatory mapping* is a useful social research method that can be applied in a range of community contexts to identify the uses, associations, and dependencies between natural resources and people (Fenton et al., 2003; Coakes & Sadler, 2011). *Mobility mapping* is another spatially based social research method to explore the movement patterns of an individual, group, or community to determine: where people go and for what reason; the frequency of visits; and the importance of places visited. A *resource map* shows the reasons behind people's movement patterns. This method is often applied in linear infrastructure projects, such as road, rail, transmission, and pipeline projects, given that such projects often traverse several communities and localities. These methods build on *participatory rural appraisal*, a family

of community-centred methods that seek to build community knowledge and encourage grassroots participation and action, enabling local people to share, enhance, and analyse their knowledge of their environment and their livelihoods (Chalmers, 1994).

With various technological developments and especially responses to the COVID-19 virus, SIA practitioners have also turned to collecting social data via digital means, opening up a virtual world of engagement and interaction. While not appropriate in all project contexts, such technology has enabled a broader range of stakeholders to access and comment on projects from the comfort of their own living rooms.

THE APPLICATION OF SOCIAL RESEARCH METHODS IN SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Multiple social research methods are typically used in undertaking an SIA, to identify, understand, evaluate, and manage the full range and extent of social impacts at play in each project context. This applies regardless of: the type of project (e.g., mining, transport, urban infrastructure, energy); the phase of the SIA (discussed further below); the setting of the project, e.g., whether rural, remote, or urban; and whether the rate of development is rapid or slow. The SIA methodology contains various core components or ‘phases’: community profiling and development of a social baseline; scoping of issues and interests; impact evaluation; development of strategies or plans to mitigate or enhance impacts (whether positive or negative); and the monitoring and management of these impacts and their respective management plans longer-term (Vanclay et al., 2015). Depending on the SIA phase being undertaken, and whether all phases are to be conducted as part of the current investigation or if only a select number of phases are to be implemented (for instance, if the baseline and scoping have already been undertaken), the social research methods to be selected will vary to ensure results are relevant, targeted, and appropriate. As there are many social research methods available, it is necessary to know how each method works and which ones are appropriate for the type of investigation and data collection intended. Drawing on two case studies, this section explains how different research methods can be used at different SIA phases.

Case Study 1: Renewable Energy Hub in Eastern Australia

A large-scale wind and solar farm development is currently in a planning phase within a government-designated renewable energy zone in Eastern Australia. An SIA has been prepared to understand and predict the range of social effects that the project may have, particularly on the local community. Given a history of development in the area across other sectors, and several other renewable energy projects also being proposed for the zone, the historical response of the community to change and the cumulative effects on the community from the multiple developments were considered important aspects to consider. The SIA was undertaken in accordance with the regulations in the state of New South Wales, Australia.

Case Study 2: Solar Project in Malawi

The development of a large solar farm in Malawi in 2019 required land to be acquired, leading to 136 households being economically displaced, and no longer able to use their natural and

economic resources. Consequently, a Livelihood Restoration Plan was prepared by the project proponent to identify and compensate the personal losses experienced by each household, and to implement technical support to enhance people's livelihoods. The Plan was developed in alignment with the International Finance Corporation's (IFC) Environmental and Social Performance Standards.

Phase 1: Social Baseline and Community Profiling

This phase of SIA is often the first undertaken. It aims to understand the existing community context of a given project, including community characteristics and demographics, the historical, cultural, and political setting, and any existing vulnerable people and at-risk groups within the population that may be affected by a project. The social research methods used in this phase include a combination of primary and secondary data sources, likely commencing with an analysis of available documents and information about the community, and a compilation of existing demographic information, such as from census data, local government data, and other social indicator datasets that might be available. Then, various primary data collection methods are used to ascertain the community's characteristics, informal social structures, values and aspirations, land uses and ecosystem services, kinship networks, etc., including household and key stakeholder surveys, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, participant observation, and/or values mapping, and a community needs assessment workshop.

An approach that can be helpful in the profiling phase of SIA is the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, which considers community capitals or assets (natural, financial/economic, physical, human, and social) as a fundamental basis by which to identify and enhance community capacity and resilience (Coakes & Sadler, 2011). While there is often an uneven distribution of assets across individuals and communities, those with a stronger and more diversified portfolio of assets are likely to have more livelihood options and should therefore prove more resilient in response to change.

The SIA for the Renewable Energy Hub in Australia commenced with the preparation of a comprehensive social baseline profile, which sought to gain an understanding of the characteristics, dynamics, and composition of communities within the social study area. To do this, the SIA team gathered relevant data and information from publicly available datasets across the key community capital areas, as well as through a literature review of local media and local government and regional strategic plans. Early consultation with key informants within the community, through semi-structured interviews and early feedback from project briefings, also assisted in compiling an overview of the local challenges and vulnerabilities, as well as the priorities and opportunities existing within the development context.

Phase 2: Scoping of Community Issues and Interests

The second phase of SIA is to scope, scan, and identify any issues or interests in relation to the project based on inputs gathered through primary social research, in combination with secondary information gathered through community profiling. In this phase, it is important that those who may be affected by a project or have an interest in the project are actively engaged to enable a preliminary identification of social impacts from the project. Social research methods that may be suitable in this phase include community surveys, interviews with key informants, focus group discussions with community members, and community information sessions.

Scoping of community issues and interests for the Renewable Energy Hub SIA in Australia involved a proactive and early round of engagement with identified priority stakeholder groups: neighbouring landholders; residents residing in nearby towns; key community groups and organisations; Traditional Owners and Aboriginal groups; local business associations; business owners; service providers; local government; and community and environmental interest groups. The social research methods used for this phase included formal project briefings, personal interviews and discussions, surveys/questionnaires, and targeted ‘question and answer’ sessions. Written records of the discussion and feedback received were incorporated into a dedicated consultation database for data coding and analysis and to inform the preliminary identification of potential social impacts.

Given that the social impacts of project change are rarely evenly distributed, with some stakeholders experiencing a greater degree of social impact than others (either more benefits or costs), it is critical that there be adequate representation of stakeholder perspectives in relation to the impacts that may be experienced. Representation refers to fully understanding and expressing the lived experiences of participants, including the multiple realities, interpretations, experiences, viewpoints, and voices of all individuals. A variety of survey methods were employed for the Renewable Energy Hub SIA to ensure that the views of varying stakeholder groups were incorporated. While such an approach indicates purposive sampling of relevant stakeholders, in other cases, random sampling methods have also been used to provide a basis to extrapolate survey findings to the broader community/population. Sample sizes will vary across the various social research methods; it is important that all stakeholders likely to be directly affected are involved in the research process, with representative samples of other relevant stakeholders being obtained. Data collected during the research process is triangulated to identify common themes and differences in perspective and impact. It is often the case that the use of multiple methods results in the issues/impacts identified reaching a point of impact saturation, that is, where no further impacts are identified through the social research process.

Phase 3: Impact Evaluation

The identification and evaluation of impacts is a critical step within SIA. It involves the prediction of social impacts and opportunities that may occur because of the project, an assessment of the magnitude and likelihood of such impacts, and consideration of how such impacts interrelate or compound. Each component must be considered from the perspectives of the people (and groups) expected to experience the impact. To do this, useful insights can be drawn from comparable projects elsewhere, or from other projects in the same area, with inputs from the affected communities about how they expect their community and individual way of life to be impacted. To understand the breadth of potential social impacts that may be experienced, the active participation of the local community is essential. The SIA practitioner needs to ensure that the planning and decision-making processes enable affected people to actively participate. Depending on the project context, this phase would likely involve several qualitative social research methods to ensure that people’s voices have been heard, a diversity of views and contributions have been gathered, and that the evidence collected is detailed enough to be effectively analysed, assessed, and evaluated in the SIA.

The SIA for the Renewable Energy Hub in Eastern Australia utilised data from a range of sources to develop a layered picture of the potential social impacts from the project. This included stakeholder perceptions of impact as well as a technical assessment of social risks.

The integration of outcomes from the technical ranking, together with stakeholder ranking of perceived impacts, enabled integration of expert and local knowledge, with both included in the development of impact mitigation, amelioration, and enhancement strategies. To achieve this, the social research methods were carefully designed and implemented to ensure that a diversity of community voices was heard. For the Renewable Energy Hub SIA, community information sessions were held at differing intervals in the SIA process to share project plans and the results of technical studies as they progressed. These sessions were a mix of informal ‘drop-in’ style sessions (e.g., open houses), as well as semi-structured forums, and included in-person events in local townships, as well as public online forums. Personal meetings and interviews were also conducted with host and neighbouring landholders, with follow-up and ongoing consultation undertaken as required by phone and/or face-to-face meetings on individual properties. A survey of local businesses and service providers was conducted to assess impacts and opportunities associated with the project, especially in relation to way of life and livelihood, and to identify how salient social impacts relating to access and use of services may be effectively managed and enhanced. The survey was completed in-person, over the phone, or online. Key informant discussions and meetings were held with industry, community, Traditional Owner, and environmental groups, and with local government agencies. Data collected in this phase was coded and analysed according to key social impact categories (using a combination of descriptive and inferential social analysis of the quantitative data, and theme and content analysis for the qualitative data), and then evaluated in conjunction with data collected in the social baseline/profiling SIA phase to inform the assessment and prediction of the likely social impacts arising from the project.

Phase 4: Strategy Development

The development of strategies and management plans to mitigate the predicted negative impacts and to enhance the potential positive benefits of the project is a critical component of SIA to ensure that projects lead to socially sustainable outcomes for affected communities. Usually, this phase is undertaken prior to the construction stage of a project to ensure that impacts can be managed early on. Strategies are typically updated or revised as impacts are experienced to ensure they are effectively addressing people’s experiences of impact, that any unidentified impacts that may arise are addressed, and that the project and its stakeholders are working towards desired outcomes.

Mixed-methods social research must be applied in this phase; the development of plans or strategies needs to be participatory and collaborative, and draw upon lessons from comparable projects, nearby community development activities, and international benchmarks. Typically, the main social research methods used in this phase gather a variety of qualitative inputs from in-depth interviews, workshops, collaborative group forums, and/or focus groups. These methods assist in ensuring that the strategies/plans being developed are targeted to address relevant impacts, are aligned with existing community aspirations and goals, and that the key stakeholders have ownership of solutions to ensure success. Other social research methods, such as case studies, may also be applied to provide an understanding of ‘what works’ at the local community level, as well as considering the broader benchmarking and comparative analyses of relevant projects further afield.

In the case of the Solar Project in Malawi, a Livelihood Restoration Plan was designed prior to land acquisition that would cause economic displacement of affected households. The Plan included the following key activities:

- Consultation with affected households.
- Delivery of financial literacy training for project-affected households to ensure that stakeholders had the knowledge and understanding to manage change more effectively.
- Provision of compensation for impacted assets.
- Additional livelihoods programme support.
- Establishment of a grievance management system to address ongoing land-related matters.

In developing the Plan, the outcomes of the social and economic baseline study were used to develop appropriate performance measures by which to monitor change. This also required allocating dedicated resources (local and qualified personnel) to implement and monitor progress against the Plan.

Phase 5: Impact Monitoring and Management

The final phase of SIA is focused on the monitoring and management of impacts once they have been realised. This involves the pre-emptive development of a monitoring framework, which is often undertaken as part of a Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP) consisting of goals or targets, mechanisms to achieve each target, key performance indicators, monitoring and review timeframes, and responsibilities for action (Franks & Vanclay, 2013). An example of this is that a goal might be to ensure that the children of families who have been resettled continue to attend school and complete their education. The mechanism for the project to ensure this is achieved could be to support families by transporting children to their current school now that they live a greater distance away. This would also employ local drivers, and perhaps entrepreneurs to establish a community bus service. The performance indicator in this example would be monitoring children's use of the bus, their school attendance, and the transport business. Social research methods that can inform the monitoring programme could include: periodic surveys and interviews with the participants of the initiative, such as households with children using the bus service and its operators; as well as discussions with key informants who have knowledge of the issues, such as the school staff and the local government administration.

The development of a Livelihoods Restoration Plan for the Solar Project in Malawi was a requirement of the IFC Performance Standard relating to land acquisition, and a key strategy to manage the economic displacement of households whose land have been acquired. The monitoring framework was based on a human rights-sensitive livelihood restoration indicator approach. A preliminary review of the Livelihoods Restoration Plan identified some significant gaps, namely the lack of a detailed socio-economic baseline to understand existing and potential livelihood activities. To address this deficiency, a survey of all project-affected households was undertaken, ensuring representation of vulnerable groups. Considerable effort to undertake a thorough survey of all affected households was needed, given that these households were highly affected. Personal interviews were undertaken with each affected household using a gender-sensitive approach, meaning that the nominated head of each household and, where this was a male, also a female member of each household was invited to participate, with findings able to be directly compared to the socio-economic baseline dataset.

This detailed survey process, involving all households rather than only a sample, identified the need for further technical support to be provided to assist the community in assessing the soil quality and agronomic feasibility of replacement land plots.

Monitoring of the Livelihoods Restoration Plan included an evaluation of the activities targeting displaced households within the first two years of land acquisition. A series of workshops was undertaken to provide training to the implementation team. Interviews with members of the implementation team and a review of project documentation and industry benchmarking were also conducted, with monitoring assessed against four key criteria: programme performance; future livelihood sustainability; effectiveness of partnerships; and performance against IFC standards. This case highlights the importance of utilising social research methods to work collaboratively with local people and community groups to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the local context, to identify natural, social, human, economic, and physical constraints and opportunities relating to plan implementation, and to ensure effective monitoring of plan delivery and livelihood outcomes.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS IN CHOOSING SOCIAL RESEARCH METHODS FOR SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An SIA practitioner must be skilled in the theoretical and epistemological bases of the social sciences and have a sound understanding of the practicalities of social research methodologies, methods and tools, as well as a good understanding of social research ethics. The following issues are critical for effective SIA.

Integrating Local Knowledge and Using Participatory Processes

Capable SIA practitioners understand the importance of integrating local knowledge, including traditional and Indigenous knowledge, with technical knowledge to support project planning and decision-making, and to achieve improved social outcomes for individuals and communities. Social research methods enable us to learn more about people and society, and within SIA, to ensure that we appropriately capture people's lived experiences – and their issues, concerns, needs, and aspirations – and to utilise this knowledge appropriately for the public good. This involves understanding the wide range of project impacts (including personal, community, social, and cultural) from the perspectives of affected people. The involvement of local people in undertaking SIA fieldwork can assist in ensuring that primary research is undertaken effectively with sensitivity to the local context, with appropriate consideration given to the local language, cultural, or ethnic group, and the political systems of the community where the SIA is being conducted. In practice, this often means that the data collectors and other field team members are sourced from within the region of the project; however, any potential conflicts of interest need to be considered when employing staff from the immediate project area. Disregard of these matters can risk the SIA process potentially affecting local social, political, or ethnic dynamics. Localisation of the field research team can provide a win–win situation, where the SIA process also provides opportunities for co-design and to develop skills amongst local communities.

The Importance of Qualitative Inquiry

A key attribute of qualitative inquiry is that it gives voice to an individual's lived experience, enabling SIA practitioners to obtain deeper insights into the unique and shared experiences and needs of affected people, and the meaning of social change for them. Qualitative inquiry and primary data collection facilitates stakeholders to express themselves with authenticity, enabling the social research to probe key issues and gain a greater understanding of the emotional responses that drive decisions and influence behaviour. This results in more robust data outcomes, and an improved understanding of social impacts and their distribution across and within communities. The concept of 'grounded theory' is often applied in qualitative research, and is appropriate to SIA practice. It refers to the iterative process of developing and testing theory and hypotheses based on the real-life stories gathered from various social research methods, especially interviews (Charmaz, 2014).

Weaving Social Data

SIA is, in effect, the art of weaving different sources and types of social data together to present a well-evidenced and complete picture of the potential social impacts associated with a project. SIA relies on the integration of multiple datasets obtained from various sources and collected through a selection of social research methods. Effective SIA practitioners can utilise a range of different social research methods to address particular social impact questions, and integrate and combine quantitative and qualitative data from different sources to determine the effects a project may have across differing stakeholder groups and locations. Just as a weaver aptly combines the warp and weft components to make a woven structure, through a mixed-method approach, the SIA practitioner interlaces qualitative and quantitative knowledge threads to produce a narrative of the impacts of planned change.

Ethical Social Research and the Principles Underpinning Social Impact Assessment

While achieving effective social outcomes is a key objective of good SIA practice (Esteves et al., 2012), the fairness of processes to achieve equitable outcomes is also important. Effective SIA is more about the approach taken to collect, assess, and analyse information to inform findings than just writing the SIA report. Consequently, in selecting and implementing social research methods to inform SIA programmes, we need to be cognisant of the core values and principles that underpin SIA practice. These are outlined in the *International Principles for Social Impact Assessment* (Vanclay, 2003).

The informed consent of participants is a critical requirement for social research to ensure that personal information gathered from individuals to input into the SIA is used and reported with anonymity (and confidentiality where requested), and with their permission (Vanclay et al., 2013). This is often established by having a written consent form to be signed by participants prior to the consultation taking place. Full disclosure on the purpose and objectives of the social research and their rights as research participants must be provided, including provision of project information to ensure that participants are meaningfully informed.

Depending on the project context, having a data management plan may be appropriate ahead of any SIA data collection and research implementation, outlining where data is to be stored and what access arrangements will apply, specifying responsibilities and permissions for

usage. The co-design of research processes with individuals and communities can assist in the development of appropriate data collection and data-sharing protocols, for example to ensure that the information collected can be further utilised.

Ensuring the Applicability of Methods, Data Reliability, and Validity

As much data may already exist, practitioners must evaluate the availability and reliability of secondary data and information to determine the extent of community data that must be collected by primary means. For instance, in country contexts where a national census is not consistently implemented and/or where the data is not publicly available, to inform what is required to be gathered firsthand, it is paramount that the SIA research team conducts a review and data gap analysis to ascertain what data is available and when it was collected and how. The applicability of methods in different project contexts also needs to be considered and planned appropriately, e.g., online tools in a remote community without internet access or written questionnaires where literacy rates are low are unlikely to yield effective social data collection.

Inclusion and Representation

When selecting research methods, it is critical to ensure that the research process is inclusive, and that the SIA does not contribute to existing social marginalisation within a community. In practice, this means that all stakeholder groups must be adequately considered in the research design process and be fairly and proactively approached for involvement in the implementation process. Inadvertently excluding certain social groups from the SIA process further contributes to their social disadvantage. Were this to happen, the SIA not only omits certain people from participating and their issues or interests from being considered, but the project itself could cause impacts because key issues were not considered in project planning, leading to risks to the community and project alike.

In contexts where women do not hold public decision-making roles within their families or communities, research processes risk excluding their voices, as researchers may only rely on existing structures of community organisation and may not seek to challenge the status quo in the SIA process. This commonly occurs at the household level when, as part of a community survey, heads of households are invited for interview, resulting in information being provided that only represents one perspective. This could result in the omission of certain impacts and experiences from the SIA entirely, or may overlook that some aspects of development affect women differently to men, and vice versa. Conversely, a gender-responsive approach to SIA research design and implementation would ensure that existing gender roles, norms, and structures are understood early in the SIA process, and specific actions are taken to facilitate culturally appropriate safe spaces for women's and girls' participation, resulting in their equal participation in the process.

CONCLUSION

SIA is a process of research, planning, and the management of social change, as well as being the assessment of positive, negative, intended, and unintended consequences arising from projects, policies, programmes, or plans (Vanclay, 2003). This chapter highlighted the impor-

tance of applying good social research methodology in the development and implementation of SIA studies. However, often the social research methods used are poorly described in SIA reports and may not have been adequately selected or implemented (da Silva et al., 2021). Unfortunately, as Vanclay (2020, p. 129) suggested: ‘SIA has not always been effective in defending the interests and human rights of project affected peoples. Sometimes, charlatans have masqueraded as responsible professionals undertaking deeply flawed research that has supported harmful projects.’

SIA is a field of research and practice with a corpus of practitioners and scholars who profess the field, an established body of knowledge relating to theory and methods, a stock of tools, accumulated practical experience and insight, a collected history of case studies, and a set of established and codified professional values (Vanclay, 2003; Esteves et al., 2012; Vanclay et al., 2015). SIA is much more than the blind application of social research methods or tools; it is only through the careful application of appropriate methods and analysis that an improved understanding of humanity and social organisation is facilitated, and the appropriate collection, analysis, and usage of social facts is ensured.

Despite the many challenges of social research (e.g., data complexity, interpreting cause and effect, the dynamic nature of social phenomena, maintaining objectivity, data unpredictability, and difficulties in verification of inference), both quantitative and qualitative social research are key components of SIA, and are a means to facilitate the identification, evaluation, and management of social impacts, to engage with key stakeholders and communities, and more effectively plan for and manage social change. Social research methods and the knowledge gained from the social sciences have a critical contribution to make to SIA, in helping SIA practitioners understand, imagine, and craft a more sustainable future through improved SIA practice.

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30. The need for ethnographic methods in impact assessment

Philippe Hanna, Annaclaudia Martini and Esther Jean Langdon

INTRODUCTION

Peter Drucker is attributed with saying that ‘culture eats strategy for breakfast’, meaning that the best planned organisational strategy can be derailed by how it plays out in different contexts. The famous management guru couldn’t be more right, with much academic literature and social impact assessment (SIA) practice establishing that many projects have failed due to inadequate consideration of local culture and the daily life and social organisation in local communities. Project failure is often related to the corporate culture of the project team (Kendra & Taplin, 2004), which tends to ignore local interests and the local context where the project will be implemented (Hanna et al., 2016a). These contexts might contain pre-existing tensions between and among local groups and multi-level stakeholders. These tensions are not usually considered in project planning (Barrett, 2013; Adusei-Asante & Hancock, 2016). We suggest that the use of ethnographic research in SIA, environmental impact assessment (EIA), and arguably other forms of impact assessment can vastly improve understanding of the local context, improve the quality of the impact assessments, and, if the information is taken on board by the project, lead to better outcomes for communities and the overall performance of the project.

The use of ethnographic research to understand local perceptions, motives, social systems, and perspectives is nothing new. Since Malinowski’s book, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922), cultural anthropology and the social sciences generally have examined the processes of change and the power dynamics experienced by various cultural groups. Many scholars have considered modern socio-economic change (and even ‘development’) as being part of the colonial and post-colonial project and have explored the consequences of such changes for local communities (e.g. Sharp, 1952; Geertz, 1956; Gordon, 2010; Vindal Ødegaard & Rivera Andía, 2019). Ethnography is an immersive methodology that uses a range of qualitative methods in extensive fieldwork during which the researcher is embedded in the community in situ, usually over a few months, if not years. Such methods include participant observation, field diaries, in-depth interviews, focus groups, and life story narratives, to produce a written account of events and their meanings as interpreted by the social/cultural group under consideration (Hay, 2016).

Geertz (1973) argued that the role of the ethnographer is to produce a ‘thick description’ of culture as a symbolic system and as it is expressed through the interactions among social actors within the culture. The task of ethnography in understanding a particular setting is not only to describe what the individuals are doing, and to interpret the contextual meanings conveyed by their actions as respectfully and consistently as possible, but also to give voice to communities and (vulnerable) groups with different social, cultural, political, and religious systems, and to

recognise that it is their internal differences that make some groups more vulnerable because of particular social, cultural, political, and religious practices. The ethnographic method is based on the understanding that societies and cultures are dynamic and heterogeneous formations, and that social interactions are guided by shared meanings and perceptions of the world, which change over time. Use of ethnography allows greater understanding of the varying reactions and responses to development projects among the different groups in society.

Ethnography is increasingly applied to understand local perspectives and to consider how people might interact with a proposed intervention. By adopting a culturally adequate approach, researchers and practitioners are able to tailor interventions to the reality of a specific cultural context (Langdon & Wiik, 2010), observing and respecting local values and cultural practices. Ethnography is also being used to understand how organisations and institutions perform in relation to certain topics, such as environmental governance and corporate social responsibility (Billo, 2015; Thaler, 2021). The use of ethnography in impact assessment has been advocated since the beginning of SIA and has been applied in various contexts since the 1970s (e.g. Berger, 1977; Roper, 1983; Schoepfle et al., 1984; Banks, 1990; Stoffle et al., 1991); however, its full value is yet to be fully appreciated by the key stakeholders in a formal impact assessment process.

In this chapter, we argue that the use of ethnographic methods can aid practitioners in assessing the full impact of development and reconstruction projects on local communities. While impact assessment guidelines and quantitative forms of assessment can aid the evaluation of social impacts, it is crucial that each assessment qualitatively addresses the local context in which it is embedded, taking into account the social, political, and cultural environment and meaning-making processes of all specific local groups. Biophysical impacts are experienced within a specific context and are socially managed according to the meaning and local responses given to the perceived changes. As argued by Vanclay (2012, 2020), the social impacts of a project start when rumours, gossip, and speculation spread, long before any construction begins, and creating expectations that may lead to anxiety and unrest. In addition to addressing biophysical issues, mitigation efforts must also deal with people's subjective perceptual experiences as well as the changes in the local socio-political context. Unless an impact assessment process is tailored to the local culture and context, it risks becoming an ethnocentric endeavour that delegitimises local practices and perceptions. If local perceptions, values, and modes of organisation are not taken into consideration in social impact assessment, there is a possibility of practitioners misinterpreting the local context, missing out important details, and/or imposing their own views on the local communities, which will likely result in inadequate and potentially offensive impact assessments (Moreira et al., 2022).

The consultation process must engage affected communities through an inclusive, participatory and culturally adequate manner in order to effectively identify and address local concerns. Otherwise, affected people are likely to experience negative impacts from the consultation and/or IA process in itself. It is important to realise that there are many situations where there may be social impacts but no biophysical impacts. By drawing upon examples from our own fieldwork, we show how the failure to understand the local context and provide for participation of local actors results in misunderstanding and a deficient SIA process that marginalises local communities and fails to identify internal differences.

HOW ETHNOGRAPHY IS DONE

Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter to give full instructions about how to do ethnography, some basic elements are provided below. Ethnography includes a set of methods that allow researchers to participate in the daily life of a group for an extended period of time in which they observe the dynamics and processes at play, listen, and ask questions in order to comprehend the local context. Ethnography has a reflexive and subjective nature, since the researcher is embedded in the context being studied, influencing and being influenced by it. Indeed, researchers need to examine not only their participants, but themselves as well, for example regarding their ethics, positionality (their positioning in relation to the context or group they are studying), possible biases, and choices of research methods (Hay, 2016). While objectivity is aimed for, ethnographic work always has a degree of subjectivity (Hoggart et al., 2002). Nevertheless, ethnography is extremely valuable since its qualitative methods allow us to understand some (but never all) of the nuances and complexities of socio-spatial relations and how these interact with the practices, experiences, actions, reactions, and daily lives of individuals and collectivities (Hay, 2016).

Researchers should prepare themselves for ethnographic research by familiarising themselves with the study context by reading about the history, and learning from previous ethnographies and sociological studies. It is necessary to self-reflect on possible bias and positionality, gain recent information on the context in which they will be embedded, and identify possible gatekeepers and facilitators. Facilitators are key informants who live or work in the context to be studied and who can share their networks and knowledge. Gatekeepers are those people in positions of control over entry, and whose support is essential to gain access to the community. Two of the most frequently used ethnographic methods are participant observation and in-depth interviews. Participant observation seeks to understand the practices and meanings in a specific context through a non-obtrusive presence and dialogue. It seeks to understand the perspectives and questions of those who will be affected by the project. Observations are recorded in a field diary, in which the researcher records information, thoughts, and impressions. The diary becomes an important instrument of self-reflection and also is a basis for the identification of the themes that guide the interviews. In contrast to closed questionnaires, qualitative interviews are dialogic and offer the opportunity to collect information, personal stories, narratives, and testimonies directly from participants, giving relevance to their voices, opinions, and worldviews. Since qualitative interviews are not based around fixed closed questions, they reveal new issues and themes not initially contemplated by the researcher.

By applying these methods, ethnographers are able to provide a rich description of the cultural context under study. Also, local values, practices, and power relations are revealed (Geertz, 1973). Without ethnographic observation, SIA practitioners run the risk of asking irrelevant questions that do not make sense in the local setting, and for which they will only get superficial or generic answers (Briggs, 1986). With an ethnographic approach, social practitioners can learn how to ask the questions that address the meanings, interpretations, and preoccupations of the community, and thus be able to grasp how its members actually perceive or are likely to experience the impacts of a given project.

FAILURES IN SIA BECAUSE OF LACK OF ETHNOGRAPHIC UNDERSTANDING

To highlight our argument, we discuss two cases involving communities with different cultural contexts and power dynamics, as well as different participatory roles in the SIA process and project implementation. The first considers the Xerente Indigenous people of Brazil who were affected by the construction of a large dam. The second examines the post-disaster interventions in rural and fishing communities along Japan's northeastern coast. Although different, each case demonstrates that even well-intended mitigation measures can result in more harm than good when the complexities and diversity of practices of the local cultures are not understood. Unless an ethnographic approach is used, SIA studies are likely to treat local communities as a static homogeneous group, failing to consider internal differences and ignoring local knowledge and experience (Baines et al., 2003). Ethnography highlights the multiform, multivocal, and heterogeneous realities of communities and the diversity of perceptions and positions of power.

Case 1: The Lajeado Hydroelectric Dam and the Xerente Indigenous People of Brazil

The construction of the Lajeado hydroelectric dam in the state of Tocantins, Brazil, demonstrated how ignorance of local culture and of the broader socio-economic and historical context can lead to serious blind spots in an SIA process that might not only cause additional negative impacts but also lead to a failure to implement adequate mitigation measures to address project impacts. Constructed between 1998 and 2002 on the Tocantins River, the dam created an enormous reservoir (630 km²) affecting not only fishing practices, but also the traditional river-flood agriculture of local people.

The Xerente Indigenous people were the major group inhabiting the land along the river downstream from the dam. They were negatively affected in many ways not foreseen by the EIA that was commissioned. The EIA focused on the dam's structural impacts on the natural environment, ignoring the transformations that the associated infrastructure and worker migration would cause to what was, at the time, a remote region. Although the EIA included a chapter called 'Indigenous Issues', it concentrated on the history of the Xerente people and had a limited focus on the potential development pressure on their territory. Consistent with common practice in the 1990s, the EIA did not consider impacts upon traditional subsistence practices of the downstream communities that relied upon the seasonal flooding of the river. Consequently, no specific study or compensation programme was initially proposed. Once the damming of the river began, the Indigenous peoples and civil society organisations began protests and exerting political pressure because of the impact on traditional subsistence practices. Eventually, in 2002 a compensation programme called PROCAMBIX (Programa de Compensação Ambiental Xerente) was established in an attempt to address the problems (Hanna et al., 2016b).

PROCAMBIX was the first multidisciplinary programme to address the impacts of a major project affecting Indigenous peoples in Brazil. It was drafted with the intention of including the Xerente in the planning and implementation of mitigation measures. The programme's steering committee was equally divided between Indigenous and non-Indigenous representatives. However, this parity did not reflect the local socio-political dynamics, given that Xerente traditional political structure is organised by moieties or clans. As a result, the Indigenous

members on the committee represented only a part of the population's interests and loyalties, resulting in intragroup conflict and accusations. The Xerente have a traditional participatory governance structure that is based on widespread consultation and dialogue, and this process was not taken into account in the steering committee's decisions. Furthermore, the steering committee's meetings were held in the state capital and operated according to a centralised bureaucratic process that not only violated these traditional decision-making methods, but also failed to recognise the importance of subsistence swidden agricultural practices. As a solution to the problem caused by the lack of seasonal flooding to their traditional practices, a series of measures was implemented to promote mechanical and commercial agriculture.

The lack of understanding of the political organisation and local cultural values led to the establishment of a centralised governance structure within PROCAMBIX that failed to consider the internal divisions of the communities. This led to the implementation of measures that were not consistent with the traditional practices and economic context of many of the Indigenous farmers. As reported in previous research:

One interviewee related the case of an agricultural project where seeds were needed at a critical time for sowing in order to secure a good harvest. However, due to delays in the transfer of funds and the transaction process to purchase the seeds, the optimal planting time had already passed before they arrived. Another interviewee described the purchase of chickens from a supplier over 2000 km away in Southern Brazil. Since the chickens were not used to the warmer climate of Tocantins, many perished soon after arrival. Furthermore, as industrially bred chickens they had been de-beaked. Totally dependent upon commercial chicken feed, they could not scavenge for their own food. ... Another significant change relates to the traditional farming technique called 'roça de toco', a variation in slash-and-burn or swidden agriculture. It was stated in interviews that, as a result of PROCAMBIX incentives to farm mechanically, this traditional practice has been largely discontinued. Thus, the inter-generational transmission of traditional farming knowledge has been affected. ... Since mechanical agriculture is dependent on the on-going availability of cheap fuel and tractor parts, its implementation failed with the cessation of PROCAMBIX funding. The interviewees affirmed that there was not a return to traditional farming techniques, impacting negatively on their cultural reproduction and food security. (Hanna et al., 2016b, pp. 310–312)

This case reveals how ignoring critical cultural aspects, including social, political, and economic organisation, can lead to mitigation measures that, although intended to counter a project's negative impacts, actually result in higher costs and may not lead to a resolution of the problems. The economic development agenda imposed on the communities ignored possible ethno-development proposals and failed in large measure because of culturally and politically inadequate solutions formulated by a centralised and non-representative committee.

Case 2: Disaster Prevention and Coastal Communities in Post-Disaster Japan

On 11 March 2011, Northeastern Japan was hit by a 9.0 magnitude earthquake, followed by a tsunami with peaks over 30 metres that ravaged the coasts of the Tohoku region and caused a meltdown at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. Around 20,000 people lost their lives, and half a million people were displaced and forced to relocate elsewhere or spend years in temporary housing. Short-term recovery actions, including the provision of shelter, food, and basic necessities, were fraught with errors and tensions at all government levels. However, long-term recovery proved even more difficult: large areas were deemed off-limits due to high levels of radiation, making it impossible for people to return home; a lottery system used

to allocate new houses was highly criticised, as it left everything to chance without giving priority to more vulnerable people; and neighbours were separated and relocated in different housing areas, impacting mental health and sense of community. The elderly were especially affected. Fieldwork in Japan between 2016 and 2020 (Martini & Minca, 2021) revealed a number of blind spots in the interventions, particularly with respect to mental health as well as the communities' desires regarding the future of their towns. Extended ethnographic fieldwork highlighted the tendency of government officials and other professionals to regard communities as homogeneous and to adopt general guidelines without recognising local diversity. The government's top-down, one-size-fits-all recovery megaprojects ignored local community opposition, which intensified over time.

One area of contention was the administration of psychological help for survivors. Although administered by Japanese psychiatrists, the mental health protocols used followed the guidelines for post-disaster mental health developed by the United States National Center of Neurology and Psychiatry. These guidelines were largely based on experiences from the Vietnam War and revised after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York (Kato et al., 2012). Although they were slightly adjusted by the Japanese authorities in response to previous Japanese disasters (e.g. the 1995 Kobe earthquake and the 2006 Niigata earthquake), they have been heavily criticised as being inadequate for the Japanese cultural context (Okuyama et al., 2017). Although Japanese practitioners defended the mental health support strategies implemented in the 2011 disaster (Kim & Akiyama, 2011; Kato et al., 2012), they failed to consider the social stigmatisation of mental health patients in Japan. They also primarily relied upon quantitative approaches that were inadequate to assess and cure traumatic experiences, especially when survivors refused to be addressed or treated as being 'mentally ill'. Indeed, psychologists and psychiatrists would have been more effective if they had initiated their work in the survivors' communities through the distribution of food, water, and other necessities, as a way of creating opportunities to broach the topic of mental distress with survivors (Karz et al., 2014).

The post-2011 reconstruction planning, which was developed by the Japanese national government in collaboration with the governments of the tsunami-hit prefectures, focused on a number of sub-projects aimed at disaster mitigation and adaptation through the raising of entire neighbourhoods by up to 9 metres, and the construction of higher, broader, and longer seawalls along 400 km of coastline. The seawall project was promptly approved by the central government, which has a strong role in local affairs through its oversight functions, the setting of national standards, and financial control. Deemed necessary to prevent future disasters, and supported by the national Reconstruction Agency, the seawall project has encountered unexpected resistance and opposition in local communities. To understand the reasoning behind community protest and resistance, fieldwork research conducted from 2016 to 2020 by the second author of this chapter showed not only the complex and non-aligned mix of subjectivities of the stakeholders involved, but also the social, cultural, and economic situation of these coastal towns. Tohoku's coastal communities and the municipal, prefectural, and national governments have become embroiled in a complex planning process caught between the pressure for rapid reconstruction action and the need to understand and plan for long-term local needs, as well as to facilitate a shared vision (Iuchi et al., 2013).

The economic consequences and lack of community participation in the planning processes caused strife and internal divisions in the community instead of participation. While the construction cost of the seawalls was covered by the national and prefectural governments, each

local community incurs the ongoing cost of maintenance. Many interviewees complained that this will lead to an increase in taxes. In rural areas prone to a loss of jobs and an ageing population, this could accelerate depopulation. Furthermore, survivor experiences with previous seawalls contributed to their resistance. Seawalls had been constructed along the coast of Tohoku as a preventive measure prior to 2011. However, most seawalls proved to be ineffective in reducing the mortality of the 2011 disaster (Dooley, 2014; Aldrich & Sawada, 2015). Before the seawalls, local communities relied on traditional ‘soft measures’, e.g. planting forests to inhibit the force of the sea, or relying on well-signed escape routes. Based on traditional ecological knowledge, these strategies permitted time to escape. The seawalls, however, acted as a physical barrier inhibiting access to escape routes (Aldrich, 2017). A better reconstruction policy would have allowed each community to design their own reconstruction and recovery process (Aldrich, 2017).

This case demonstrates how, when local culture and practices are not carefully considered, well-intended emergency measures can negatively impact target groups. In post-disaster Japan, the strategy of constructing higher and broader seawalls showed a lack of understanding by government officials and project engineers of local community concerns and desires. Furthermore, there was no process of assessing the social and cultural impacts that these seawalls caused, or their effectiveness as a mitigation strategy in the 2011 tsunami. Although before 2011, they were considered to be effective disaster prevention measures, during the 2011 disaster, the sea defence infrastructure was actually a liability, as the seawalls led to a false sense of security (so people did not evacuate), and the debris from disintegrated seawalls (as they were largely destroyed by the tsunami) caused much damage. Major interventions introduced by governmental institutions at different scales included: ‘elevated rail lines, highways, and bridges, as additional inland lines of levee defences; relocating housing and businesses to higher, hillside lands or behind secondary defences; artificially elevating land near the ocean before reconstructing industrial and other uses there; and preserving the lowest-lying areas for agricultural activities’ (Iuchi et al., 2013, p. 486). While many community members were in favour of the seawalls, others lament that such a megaproject was unnecessary, invasive, and failed to involve local communities. By creating a divide between land and sea, the livelihoods of fishers (the main subsistence activity of these communities) have become more complicated, and the concrete barriers affected tourism and marketing of these towns as tourism destinations (Martini & Minca, 2021).

Residents and local groups have proposed various alternatives to the projects, including: the creation of a ‘forest wall’, a barrier of trees that would slow down the speed of tsunami waves, allowing people to evacuate; adjusting the size of the walls in some areas to maintain the aesthetic of towns and allow better marketing for tourism; moving the wall further away from the shore to encourage the growth of marine vegetation and shellfish; and creating hybrid seawalls that can also function as a road. For the most part, these proposals have been ignored. In spite of these alternatives being proposed and ethnographic studies highlighting the consequences of not including active community participation in the reconstruction process (Aldrich, 2017, 2019; Kimura, 2016), the construction of the seawalls has continued unabated.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT UNDERSTANDING THE LOCAL CONTEXT

The failure to respect local culture and practices results in the implementation of mitigation measures that negatively impact affected people (Hanna et al., 2016b). Not only does the failure to recognise diversity of cultural and social organisation harm local communities, but it also leads to loss of social capital, human rights violations, protests, loss of social licence to operate, reputational harm, and potentially to the closure of projects (Hanna et al., 2016c; Vanclay & Hanna, 2019). Depending on the nature and scale of the project, work stoppages due to conflict with local communities can cost millions per week (Franks et al., 2014). Current academic discussions about the role of anthropology in the extractive industries often focus on ethnographic accounts of contexts where conflicts have already occurred and on the problematic positionality of anthropologists doing ethnography in these contexts (Ballard & Banks, 2003; Henriksen, 2004; Jacka, 2018; D'Angelo & Pijpers, 2022). These accounts reveal many reasons for conflict. Nevertheless, it is very evident that tokenist stakeholder engagement followed only by desktop-based SIA practice will likely result in conflict at some point after a contentious project proceeds (Hanna et al., 2016c).

Ethnographic research undertaken as part of World Bank community development projects in Uganda demonstrated that, despite the well-intended and structured methodology focusing on local empowerment and adaptation to local institutions, a lack of understanding of the cultural context led to a failure to achieve project goals (Adusei-Asante & Hancock, 2016). As seen in the Japan case, interventions tend to ignore the regional historical context and previous experiences of communities. Cumulative impact assessment (or cumulative effects assessment) is seldom conducted, and even when undertaken, tends to focus on projects being constructed at the same time, rather than considering previous projects or likely future developments (Rifkin, 2021). In the Japan case, negative experiences with the previous seawalls and awareness of the likely socio-economic consequences from the construction of new seawalls contributed to community opposition to the new projects.

Typically, minorities such as Indigenous peoples and rural, marginal communities who rely on the environment for subsistence and cultural reproduction (see Hanna et al., 2014) are ignored. Other vulnerable groups are also often left out of consideration in the impact assessment, such as those with disabilities, women, youth, and LGBTQ+ groups (Stienstra et al., 2020; see Chapter 17). In order to foster more inclusive SIA processes, a gender-based and intersectional approach is being increasingly advocated to identify contexts of marginalisation experienced by specific individuals and social groups (Götzmann & Bainton, 2021). Ethnographic fieldwork, which reveals the complexities of the local context and the necessity for collaboration with local experts, is needed in order to identify those groups and individuals who are often overlooked in stakeholder engagement activities.

As demonstrated by the Lajeado dam in Brazil, efforts to mitigate impacts effectively do not always avoid negative impacts on the affected populations, especially if the consultation and stakeholder engagement processes do not consider the political organisation and identify and address local concerns. Ignorance of local political processes and perceptions results in procedural unfairness, causing anxiety, loss of sense of place, alienation, and other forms of social and emotional distress. Consistent with the requirements of human rights instruments and other international standards (Vanclay & Hanna, 2019; Kashfi & Hanna, 2022), how the affected group perceives the project and the consultation process must be considered; and

stakeholders must be respected, included, and part of the transformational process that is unfolding in the place where they belong. We argue that, to understand local practices and social dynamics and facilitate inclusion of the community in identifying and minimising negative impacts, there is a need for an ethnographic approach in all EIA and SIA processes. There is a need to understand the local organisational context in order to predict potential project impacts and collaboratively develop adequate mitigation measures with affected groups.

THE VALUE OF ETHNOGRAPHY FOR SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Ethnography actively entails an effort to hear and understand the other, the first step necessary for respectful dialogue. It has a role in all phases of SIA (Vanclay et al., 2015). During project conception, ethnography is a key method for a culturally adequate SIA process in order to understand the local issues and shape the stakeholder engagement process according to the local context. During project construction, ethnography informs adequate mitigation procedures and identifies impacts that might have been overlooked during the impact assessment process. During project operation, ethnography can inform effective participatory monitoring, the evaluation of mitigation measures, and fair governance models. With the project's decommissioning, ethnography can play an important role in identifying the post-closure aspirations of the affected communities and assisting in developing a closure plan that is consistent with the social context.

Ethnography in SIA can be used to:

- Investigate the meaning of the project for the affected people
- Study the knowledge, practices, and symbolic universes of affected people
- Identify the plurality of social actors
- Recognise the agency (or protagonism) of the different groups
- Recognise power differences and other inequalities within a community
- Identify the different social spaces
- Develop a more detailed and robust social baseline and community profile than current practice.

Consideration of local culture to assess impacts or to propose mitigation measures is only part of the contribution that ethnography can provide. Ethnography also contributes to empowering community participation to the maximum level of the participation spectrum (IAP2, 2016). If the principle of free, prior and informed consent (Hanna & Vanclay, 2013) is to be fully respected, ethnographic methods are needed so that SIA practitioners can act as effective and culturally aware facilitators in the IA process and help to position communities in a leading role in assessing impacts, consenting or withholding project approval, and ultimately establishing the conditions for mitigation, compensation, or enhancement measures that will be necessary for the project to proceed. By doing so, it is more likely that adequate measures for communities will be proposed and that proper SIA follow-up will be sustained throughout the project cycle.

It is challenging to undertake lengthy ethnographic fieldwork, especially in the competitive context of environmental consultancy or in the environmental permitting process. The lack of a flexible timeline that can be adjusted to each project context is problematic in many ways.

Firstly, understanding a local context requires time, as social–cultural systems are complex and many important facets will only be revealed through participant observation of community life, and certainly not through standard stakeholder engagement workshops. A superficial understanding of the local context will lead to an inadequate assessment of the social and environmental impacts and how they might be mitigated. Secondly, each community needs its own timeframe in which to consider whether a project is beneficial to their development trajectory or their ‘ethno-development’, which for many communities generally differs from the Western capitalist development model (Stavenhagen, 1986). Even when project approval is granted by communities, time is required to collaboratively develop adequate and inclusive mitigation measures. By pressuring communities to conform to a restrictive licensing timeframe, additional social impacts are created, usually related to the uncertainty and anxiety caused by the project. Thirdly, a tight project licensing timeline tends to cause resistance from local communities, potentially leading to conflict. By allowing enough time to negotiate, de-escalation strategies can be implemented (Vanclay & Hanna, 2019), latent conflicts can be redressed, and a collaborative impact assessment process with true community participation (Morales, 2019; Hanna et al., 2022) can be implemented. Thus, besides fostering a more effective SIA process, understanding the perceptions, opinions, and needs of local people creates trust between the various stakeholders and reduces conflict. All collaborative and culturally adequate assessment processes require the cessation of the project (and potentially any impact assessment process) if they are regarded as unacceptable by the local community (Hanna & Vanclay, 2013; Joly et al., 2018).

The notion of an ‘expert anthropologist’ to understand a cultural setting prior to an intervention can be considered as a colonialist approach. It is important to clarify that our proposal for the role of ethnography envisions the use of ethnographic methods as being one of translation between two different cultural settings – with the anthropologist acting as a facilitator in the impact assessment process rather than being seen as the ‘local specialist’. Community advocacy is increasing and many impact assessment processes are now being led by local communities (Morales, 2019; Jolly & Thompson-Fawcett, 2021; Hanna et al., 2022). With the intention to act as mediators or facilitators, the use of an ethnographic approach by the IA team stimulates a dialogue that articulates the different perceptions and opinions, recognising the right of the impacted community to participation and collaboration in the IA process.

When working in any setting – but especially when various social groups are involved – it is necessary to reflect on the power relations and positionality of the SIA team, who are usually consultants hired by the company proposing the project. Ethnographic research is interpretive and is situated in political, social, cultural, and institutional contexts (Hay, 2016). Qualitative investigations, such as ethnography, place the researcher within an ongoing social and political interaction in which she or he also carries a subjective perspective. In the case of impact assessment research paid for by the project proponent, the possible biases of the investigator also imply ethical concerns, as well as social, cultural, and political implications (Baines et al., 2013; Vanclay et al., 2013). It must be recognised that the ethnographic process of understanding the diversity of a specific situation and impact assessment research are mediated and interpreted according to specific cultural perspectives and political and economic interests. To attenuate existing biases and improper or inadequate solutions, it is crucial to achieve an ethnographic understanding that will aid in implementing culturally and politically adequate measures that include full participation throughout the SIA process.

CONCLUSION

Deep understanding of the local context is key for any intervention, whether for mitigating a project's impacts or for disaster risk reduction. Although EIA often entails extensive, long-term baseline studies involving many specialists over several years, this is rarely the case for SIA. In SIA, which is typically confined to a chapter within a broader EIA report, SIA teams tend to comprise only one or two practitioners with a very limited time period to consider the social aspects. Consequently, their reports mainly result in quantitative analyses of the socio-economic aspects, ignoring the important social and cultural consequences that will affect the communities (Kahangirwe & Vanclay, 2022).

Ethnographic fieldwork that requires the researcher to become familiar with the local context by spending extensive periods of time in situ should be an integral part of SIA processes if the local context is to be taken seriously and be fully understood by the impact assessment team. To be consistent with a proper ethnographic approach, the SIA process must respect and incorporate local traditional knowledge, use local experts, and allow the process to be led by the impacted community. Ethnography is based on genuine listening and dialogue. Without ethnographic knowledge and the dialogue that it fosters, participatory methodologies are likely to be inadequate and key project's impacts might not be identified. Ethnography informs how participation methodologies could be structured in order for them to be inclusive to all local (sub)groups and be respectful of local practices. The use of ethnography is necessary to comprehend how local communities will experience social and environmental impacts, and is essential to develop culturally adequate consultation methods and effective mitigation measures. It also promotes trust and improves cross-cultural communication between groups with different goals, interests, and perceptions, allowing dialogue with the community members, and facilitating their active participation in the impact assessment process.

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31. Trauma-informed impact assessment

Somia Sadiq

‘Apni Kaniyaat di awaaz nu pullan di kooshish karen gi na, tay khhaaban che tay zindaa ren geyann’
[Translation: If you try to forget the voices of your universe, how else would they stay alive, except through your dreams] – Khalida Tabassum (my maternal grandmother).

These words came wisely from *Naano*, my maternal grandmother, as she tried to help a ten-year-old me make sense of the night terrors that plagued me. Suppressed memories – our own, those of our ancestors, those of our active engaged reality, and those mysteriously contained in our genetic composition, our historical and current sociological and psychological construct – have a way of journeying from our subconscious to the conscious being. For me, these words formed some of the very first steps in my journey to understand trauma.

As an intergenerational survivor of one of the largest and bloodiest mass migrations of the century that occurred in the 1940s and 1950s in the Indo-Pak subcontinent, a survivor of the Gulf War in the 1990s, a survivor of racial trauma as a newcomer to Canada shortly after 9/11, and a survivor of much more that I have not yet mustered the strength to speak about, I have always had a love–hate relationship with trauma. It continues to haunt me every day, but it also teaches me, paces me, coaches me; like an energy that must be tamed, managed, embraced, moulded, expended, and carefully channelled. Trauma is my closest friend, and my darkest enemy.

Truth be told, I have not always considered the role of trauma in my Impact Assessment (IA) practice all these years. My trauma was for me to manage, not for others to worry about. I, on the other hand, was acutely aware of the trauma in communities I worked with. I saw trauma manifest in people’s expressions, frustrations, lack of trust, and sometimes in their inability to participate in mere everyday life. Over the years as a practitioner in Canada, my conversations with Elders and Knowledge Keepers were rarely just about the projects I was there to speak to them about. While we would start with the ‘where the road should go’, conversations would almost always quickly dive into the dark history of the Indian Residential School system and the horrifying scars this legacy had left on them, their children, and their grandchildren. Instead of talking about roads, we would talk about sexual abuse, assault, poverty, racism, addictions, and suicide. I would then be invited back with ‘thank you for listening’. And yes, we would eventually talk about the road and their fear of what it might do to an already fragile system, but the journey and the invaluable relationships in the process of getting there are hard to describe.

A couple of housekeeping things: Firstly, I do not write this chapter as a mental health professional. I write as someone with a lived experience with trauma, and personal experience on the frontlines of communities deeply affected by trauma. This is important to note for two main reasons: one, for the most part, colonial knowledge systems and practices mostly fail to allow meaningful space for the voices of lived experience and contain assumptions and biases that traumatised individuals are unfit for educational spaces. And two, a societal approach to conceptualising health, mental health, and our overall wellbeing is more siloed than holistic, which prevents us from seeing the broader societal context that informs our wellbeing.

Secondly, this chapter serves to bring trauma to the forefront of conversation around impact assessment practice. While the last two decades have seen significant attention to trauma and trauma-informed discourse in various fields, including in the services sector, environmental sustainability, mental health, and so on (Wright et al., 2020), understanding of trauma has been absent from the IA field. If we adhere to the principle of *do no harm*, then there is no question in my mind that our work must be trauma-informed. This chapter therefore aims to bridge the path so that practitioners, researchers, policy makers, and all those who are involved in the planning process can contribute to and learn from the trauma discourse.

Reflecting on some lessons from the field, and weaving in some elements from the trauma literature, this chapter presents a basic overview of trauma, the types of traumas, and relevance to the field of IA, and provides principles to make IA trauma-informed – both for communities we work with and for ourselves as practitioners operating in the field and engaging with digital content. The chapter concludes with some final reflections on the path forward for Trauma-Informed Impact Assessment (TIIA).

WHAT IS TRAUMA?

Trauma is defined as an event, series of events, or set of circumstances experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual wellbeing (SAMHSA, 2014b). This broad definition implies that trauma is indeed widespread. In a national study conducted in 2008 that included 2,991 participants, 76 per cent reported traumatic exposure sufficient to cause Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) – 73 per cent in women, and 78 per cent in men (Van Ameringen et al., 2008). While most people who experience trauma will go on to live their lives without lasting adverse effects, others have more difficulty. These difficulties may manifest themselves in the form of compromised neurodevelopmental systems and a multitude of chronic and acute health problems (Felitti et al., 1998; Anda et al., 2008). Given the nature of these challenges, we may either not see the impacts, or may simply associate them with other sociological phenomena. As our understanding of trauma and how it affects people evolves, so does our realisation that we simply cannot ignore the distinction between those who have more difficulty coping with trauma and those who don't.

TYPES OF TRAUMA

This section briefly outlines a few types of trauma. There is an increasing volume of literature that speaks to types of traumas, the intersectionality of trauma, the classifications of trauma from a clinical perspective, from a sociological perspective, and the multitude of nuances within these. The list below, therefore, just touches the surface in contextualising trauma and provides a basic understanding of the overall concept and some examples for how it may be relevant to IA practice.

Developmental trauma, also known as Adverse Childhood Experiences, refers to childhood trauma such as chronic abuse, neglect, or other developmental adversity in a child's home. This may include experiences like having a parent with mental illness or substance use, aban-

donment, physical, verbal, or sexual abuse, witnessing violence, etc. (CAMH, 2022). Families who have experienced upheaval or displacement due to war, oppression, racism, natural disasters, residential school systems, projects, and or other forms of trauma may pass trauma on to their children. This can result in disruptions and unhealthy coping adaptations that might span multiple generations, with cumulative impacts building through the generations (Mazor & Tal, 1996; O'Neill et al., 2016). Developmental trauma can severely impact the ability of children to build healthy relationships, and/or develop skills and functions critical to everyday life.

Environmental trauma is trauma caused by loss of connection to the environment. Humans form ties to their environment, be it buildings, monuments, the trees, the waters, the food, the music. Over time, these components of the environment become elements of our identity. In some worldviews, the environment is a living, breathing being and intrinsically a part of humans. A disruption of the environment is then inseparable from disruption of the self. Environmental trauma may be caused by natural disasters or be human induced (such as war resulting in displacement and disruption of ties to the natural environment). Environmental trauma can become cultural trauma if it affects one group more than others (and can eventually intersect with racial trauma) (Autti, 2021). For example, the Yiaku people who live in the Mukogogo Forest in central Kenya have relied on bees since time immemorial for livelihood, rituals, and medicines. They could be at risk of environmental trauma if a natural disaster or an infrastructure project threatened to destroy their ancestral forest. They also may have previously lost part of their ancestral forest so may already have experienced environmental trauma.

Gender trauma refers to trauma based on sexual orientation and gender identity (Silverman, 2015; Iantaffi, 2020). Understanding gender trauma allows us to explore the intersectionality between gender and trauma and acknowledges that individuals who identify outside of the gender binary are at a greater risk of developmental trauma, as well as other forms of trauma that may emerge from gendered expectations within sociological constructs (Segalo, 2015). Within the context of IA, understanding gender trauma is key to designing processes that create space for those who identify outside the binary construct to participate in the process meaningfully and respectfully, and understanding how projects may impact such individuals differently than others.

Intergenerational trauma refers to the experience of trauma extending from one generation to the next. Ongoing occurrences and exposure to genocidal practices, colonisation, and systemic racism can extend the experience of personal trauma beyond the individual and onto the next generation (Morrissette & Naden, 1998; O'Neill et al., 2016). For individuals with intergenerational trauma, the first experience of trauma can often be traced back decades. Intergenerational trauma has a strong overlap with historical and racial trauma. For example, children of survivors of the Indian Residential School system in Canada may have a significantly harder time trusting any projects led by the Canadian government, both due to their own racial trauma, and trauma extending to them through their parents and grandparents.

Racial trauma, or race-based stress, refers to dangerous events related to real or perceived experience of racial discrimination and involves ongoing psychological and physiological stress due to direct or vicarious exposure to race-based stress. Racial trauma includes threats of harm or injury, humiliation and/or shaming, or witnessing these actions on other racialised individuals due to real or perceived differences (Comas-Díaz et al., 2019). An example of racial trauma within the context of IA would be trauma resulting from sexual violence towards Indigenous women from real or perceived conditions created by a project in the extractive industry.

Secondary trauma – the idea that prolonged exposure to emotionally demanding situations without adequate support can result in psychological strain for people has been around since the 1970s – is a phenomenon first observed in emergency workers who started displaying symptoms similar to the people they were caring for (Moulden & Firestone, 2007). Secondary trauma is stress resulting from working with traumatised individuals (Pellegrini et al., 2022), and includes adverse psychological, emotional, and cognitive effects resulting from hearing someone else’s traumatic experiences (Greinacher et al., 2019). In the context of IA, secondary trauma would refer to a particular traumatic event whereby an interviewer listened to a detailed account of sexual abuse experienced by a survivor of an Indian Residential School, or even a researcher who conducts thematic analysis on a transcript of the interview. Secondary trauma could occur for a second participant in that same interview who was merely accompanying the individual being interviewed and stayed back to ‘sit in’ in the interview.

Vicarious trauma is understood to be the cumulative transformative outcome of working with survivors of traumatic events (Devilly et al., 2009). Vicarious trauma is different from burnout, in that burnout is general physiological stress from being overworked with minimal support to manage the additional stress, and uncertainty or ambiguity in roles and/or responsibilities (Devilly et al., 2009; Maslach et al., 2001; Trippany et al., 2004). In the context of IA, vicarious trauma would be the cumulative stress over time of working with communities with multiple forms of trauma.

RELEVANCE OF TRAUMA TO IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Building a TIIA would mean a basic acceptance that trauma is an important factor that must inform the assessment processes, just like sound science and including Indigenous and local understandings of the biophysical environment or considering alternative routes to get from A to B, or considering both positive and negative impacts of actions, or a proponent open to design revisions. Borrowing from the field of social services, being trauma-informed refers to frameworks designed to promote ethical and empowering interactions with trauma survivors (Day, 2018). Building on Butler et al. (2011), who reflected on this from practice in the field of psychiatry, and adapting their definition to the IA discipline, being trauma-informed means to acknowledge and understand the role of trauma in the individuals and communities we work with, and designing a process that adapts to the vulnerabilities of trauma survivors, and facilitates their participation in the process.

I must emphasise that the ‘scope’ of this is not limited to stakeholders and communities who are being engaged or involved in processes, but also practitioners and proponents and decision-makers involved in the process. For example, there is much recognition of the impacts of vicarious trauma on researchers of sexual trauma (Coles et al., 2014), a factor quite relevant to understanding risks of exacerbating sexual violence in projects with labour camps in vicinity to remote communities, or practitioners exploring the impacts of the Indian Residential School system in Canada. Repeated exposure to other people’s social traumas can be distressing – including conducting interviews themselves (i.e., hearing the account first-hand) or reading the transcribed text, imagery, and even notes. Hubbard (1998) and Chaitin (2003) have reflected on the challenge of this as researchers working with survivors of political violence. Being trauma-informed by no means suggests we must all become health care professionals – merely

that we must have enough understanding to be able to build, implement, and review IA processes with a trauma lens.

PRINCIPLES OF A TRAUMA-INFORMED IMPACT ASSESSMENT APPROACH

Over the last two decades, a lot has been said about principles of trauma-informed work, principles, and approaches. While ‘trauma-specific services’ are interventions aimed specifically at addressing trauma symptoms (DeCandia et al., 2014; Champine et al., 2022), ‘trauma-informed care’ refers to a global framework that entails changing programmes, policies, and practices to understand and address trauma (DeCandia et al., 2014; Hanson et al., 2018; Champine et al., 2022). Becoming trauma-informed, a topic most relevant to IA, is more generic, and requires awareness, understanding, and action, depending on one’s role in a process (Hanson et al., 2018). A TIIA then would be characterised by realisation, recognition, response, and resistance to re-traumatisation (Tebes & Kraemer, 1991; Harris & Fallot, 2001; SAMHSA, 2014a):

1. Have basic realisation about trauma.
2. Have basic ability to recognise trauma.
3. Have basic ability to respond to trauma.
4. Have basic ability to resist re-traumatisation.

The SAMHSA (2014a) provides some principles for a trauma-informed approach. Building upon these principles, tying in what is important for psychosocial wellbeing, and reflecting on relevance to IA, below I provide some principles that I have found to serve as an important starting point. I say starting point because any good practitioner who has worked on the frontlines with communities, and perhaps learned the hard way, will tell you that one should never go to a community with principles written out already. A respectful, meaningful process that values collaboration and project, plan, or policy improvements, and that runs perhaps the greatest chance of long-term success and acceptability will involve people right from the start – building some principles of working together collaboratively. That said, below are some principles that could serve as a starting point for practitioners to consider when building the framework for a TIIA. I must note three things before I relay these principles. I must note that words simply do not do justice to the degree of overlap, intersectionality, and the need to recognise that these principles should be interpreted in harmony and holism. As a subset to this, the English language alone also does not do justice to the meaning behind these words (a topic well beyond the scope of this chapter).

1. Humility
2. Safety
3. Collaboration
4. Relationality
5. Trustworthiness
6. Transparency
7. Networks of support
8. Agency
9. Responsiveness

Humility

Humility in this context is meant to recognise that our interpretations of people, the world we live in, our interactions, and our actions are informed by our worldviews, our knowledge systems, and our way of knowing and being. In an IA process, we must recognise that our understanding of the world may be deeply influenced by colonial ways of thinking and knowing. Humility requires us to approach the process and those engaged in the process with an open mind and a willingness to accept their reality, their truth, and their understanding, as we weave ours into it through the process. For practitioners and researchers, this means recognising that not all answers lie in the hard sciences or by applying our understanding of a scientific method. Or recognising that the answers we get from our methods today may not be entirely relevant a month from now, a year from now, or a decade from now – or even that we could be fundamentally wrong. For policy makers, this means recognising that all the rules, laws, and regulations are not necessarily in the best interest of all people, and that there are other legal systems that have shaped societies, their decision-making, and their interpretations for millennia. Humility at its core represents recognition that there are other, just as relevant, just as valid, just as influential, just as powerful, systems of understanding and shaping the world.

Safety

Safety in this context refers to both physical safety as well as psychological safety. Physical safety refers to the physical surroundings and psychological safety refers to people feeling comfortable that they can share their input without fear of retaliation or dire consequences. A trauma-informed approach also means recognising that our interpretation of safety may be different from that of others. Someone who survived the war in the Ukraine may have a different threshold of risk tolerance than someone who was born and raised in a suburban part of some big city somewhere safe. Someone who was born and raised in a refugee camp in Jordan may have a different expectation of what is safe compared to someone in a rural community in a developed country like Australia, Canada, or the United States. Someone who was subjected to torture as a prisoner of war may feel unsafe in a room that looks, feels, or in any way reminds them of the room where they were subjected to torture thousands of miles and two decades away – even if the room they are in now is in a perfectly ‘safe’ neighbourhood, such as in a lovely boutique hotel in The Hague in the Netherlands. A survivor of human trafficking who was smuggled in the back of a truck may feel unsafe in a hazmat suit or accessing a small, confined space in a food processing facility as a part of a well-meaning site tour by a proponent to one of their facilities to help stakeholders familiarise themselves with what is being proposed in their town.

Collaboration

Collaboration may mean different things to different people. To me, collaboration in the context of a TIIA means emphasising partnerships, recognising the value of what others bring, how they bring it, and finding ways to truly work together. It means to level the power dynamics in a way that recognises that healing happens when people actively share power and decision-making – and that means decision-making at all levels of the process; from some-

thing as simple as where two parties meet to discuss, how they discuss it, what they order for lunch for a community session, what they discuss, if they have an agenda for a meeting at all, to building mitigation measures together, to building consensus on which alternative works best on most fronts, and so on.

Relationality

Relationality in the context of a TIIA means recognising that we are all related in some way and taking that further to recognise that the decisions we make impact not just communities and stakeholders, but also us as practitioners, researchers, and policy makers. It means recognising that for us to be trauma-informed, we must weave in ourselves. It means stepping away from the colonial mindset of ‘separating the professional from the personal’. By saying this, I am by no means encouraging a loss of appropriate boundaries, but rather that we must recognise that the work we decide to do, the way we approach the work itself, and everything that follows from that is very much a product of our personal selves. For example, if a practitioner attending a community meeting was bullied at school as a child, and now in a meeting finds a community member shaming them for something that reminds the practitioner of a particular incident from their school days that caused significant trauma, it is obvious that how the practitioner will respond to the community member will be influenced by that incident. Relationality within IA means recognising that how we design programmes can in fact be informed constructively by our own personal experiences as well as those of others, i.e., relationality means we can quite easily create space for our lived experience to inform how we conduct impact assessments.

Trustworthiness

Much is said about trust and trustworthiness in the world of impact assessment (Bice & Moffat, 2014; Jijelava & Vanclay, 2017; Sadiq & Sinclair, 2020). Trust within the context of TIIA is about holding space for trust to be built. Recognising that every step, every conversation, every action contributes to trust in some way, even in moments that two parties may not agree with each other. It means recognising that trust is not set in stone – it is not something we arrive at – it is the journey itself. It is not something we can assume has been achieved and hence no longer to be worked on, but very much an ongoing process of improving and building upon.

Transparency

Much has been expressed over the decades about the need for engagement within an IA process to be transparent for it to be meaningful (Bice & Moffat, 2014; Bond et al., 2018; Parsons, 2020; Sinclair et al., 2022). Transparency within the context of TIIA refers to openness and willingness to share. It means to communicate what can and cannot be done through the process. It requires being upfront, being open about the information. It means relaying realistic expectations of what information can and cannot be shared, when, and how. Much like the principle of mutuality, transparency requires considering expectations of those who we work with within an impact assessment process.

Peer Supports

Peer supports refers to integrating within the approach deliberate mechanisms for people to support each other, learn from each other through shared experiences, through reciprocity, and building trauma awareness together. When considering trauma in the communities we work with, peer support or ‘networks of support’ can refer to looking more holistically at societal networks, systems, rituals, activities, and others that may offer healing, support, and resilience for individuals coping with various forms of trauma.

Agency

Agency refers to a sense of control over consequences or actions, of being in the ‘driving seat’ when it comes to our actions (Moore, 2016; Synofzik et al., 2008). The concept carries strong connection with wellbeing, empowerment, sense of responsibility, sovereignty, free will, and freedom. Within the context of TIIA, being mindful of the concept of agency means recognising that to mitigate the risk of re-traumatisation, we must be mindful of building a process that allows for people to exercise agency and make decisions without coercion (Sadiq & Sinclair, 2020). It also means building a process that has consequences built into it for violation of what is acceptable.

Responsiveness

Responsiveness carries a strong overlap with transparency and adaptability. However, an important distinction is that for a process to be trauma-informed, those involved in the process must be able to see that the process is responsive to their participation. For example, when feedback is solicited, people should be able to see that their feedback did result in some changes, or if not, that they can understand why not. It means people should be able to see themselves reflected in the process in some meaningful fashion. It means building a process that has the flexibility to be able to respond to communities and stakeholders. And lastly, it means being able to respond to the signs of traumatic impact as the impact assessment process progresses.

WHAT NEXT?

A TIIA requires that there be a Trauma Management Plan (TMP) for the process, built to consider: (1) communities and stakeholders that the process will engage with through the process; and (2) the team of practitioners, professionals, and others who would be responsible for overseeing, conducting, and reviewing the assessment itself. A TMP may touch on the following key elements:

1. Project and process overview
2. Principles of a trauma-informed approach
3. Accountability and responsibility (i.e., who will be responsible for ensuring successful implementation of the Trauma Management Plan and adapt the plan to emerging circumstances)

4. Team capacity and trauma awareness (reflect on the degree of trauma awareness in the team that will be involved in the IA process)
5. Managing trauma in the engagement and/or consultation process (reflect on venue selection, building and implementing data collection tools, interview and/or engagement methods, trauma supports for participants during and after interviews and focus groups, selection of interviewers, etc.)
6. Managing trauma for IA teams (reflect on potential sources and types of trauma exposure both in-field and digital exposure, preparedness protocols, debrief protocols, check-ins, selfcare plans, peer supports, etc.)
7. Other elements relevant to the process and participants.

CONCLUSION AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR TRAUMA-INFORMED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

For IA to become TIIA, we must acknowledge the role of trauma in the communities in which we live and work. For TIIA to become a reality beyond such an aspiration, practitioners and communities need to push for it within their domains. TIIA requires policy adaptations, changes to status quo, and organisational changes that support employees and their realities. It goes without saying that a TIIA would also require investment in building teams that are trauma-informed and are able to conduct the work in a trauma-informed way. But, perhaps most importantly, TIIA represents a deeper, more insightful way of conducting this important work.

Secondly, Ifowodo's psychosocial realist perspective, which I believe is critical to this conversation, is that trauma is tied to the sociohistorical events that produce it (Ifowodo, 2013, p. 132). If we are to accept that trauma should be a factor that must inform IA practice, and we accept that trauma is an outcome of the sociohistorical history of a group of people, then we must meaningfully go far back in time to contextualise the true social impacts of settler colonial decisions on this group. Thus, to meaningfully understand the impacts on people and societies, we must include sociohistorical realities in establishing our IA baseline.

Lastly, exercising humility requires me to express that I am merely trying to start this conversation. I invite collaboration, further investigation, further reflection from my peers in the field of IA on key assumptions, principles, and approaches to being trauma-informed in our discipline. Ultimately, the goal is for all of us to be able to sleep well at night, knowing that we have made the world a better place for our future generations than we found it – one conversation, one reflection, one action at a time.

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32. Visual tools in social impact assessment: issues of perception, communication, and ethical dilemmas

Ana Roque de Oliveira

INTRODUCTION

What could be more powerful than the image? For all those who should understand but do not, it is the worthiest, most striking translation of thought. – Frédéric Mistral.

Visual tools, also referred to as images, visualisations, or visuals, have evolved as an important means of communication (Oldrup & Carstensen, 2012). Such tools have the potential to constitute a common language or medium, and to overcome important language, social, cultural, political, educational, and information technology barriers. This applies to all disciplines, but is especially the case for the social sciences and education fields, as well as to processes such as public participation within environmental and social impact assessment (ESIA). Visual tools are able to promote dialogue, shared learning, and critical thinking. This is especially relevant if those involved in a participatory process have differing cultural, literacy, or technical backgrounds, and/or have varying perspectives, concerns, and priorities.

So, what do we mean by ‘visual tools’? In this chapter, visual tools include graphic displays or illustrations of data or concepts, and depictions of relationships (e.g. cause–effect) or scenarios (e.g. alternatives to a proposed project). Visual tools can be static or interactive, and can even be co-designed between the public and other stakeholders in an ESIA decision-making process (Oliveira & Partidário, 2020). Drawing on Oliveira and Partidário (2020), the usefulness of visual tools in areas such as natural resource management, urban and rural planning, and environmental and social impact assessment, is discussed below. Participatory communication refers to the use of visual tools such as maps, diagrams, drawings, photos (including aerial and satellite photos), videos, or three-dimensional (3D) models to convey or discuss relevant information in planning or assessment processes (such as ESIA). Combining different types of visual tools is common, for example, aerial photos and drawings to illustrate a project location and its surroundings (see Figure 32.1).

When maps are used, such participatory processes are typically called mapping activities or participatory mapping (Brown & Fagerholm, 2015). The complexity of these approaches varies immensely, ranging from basic floor maps (Blangy et al., 2008; Chevalier & Buckles, 2013, 2021) to the use of fine detailed maps and geographic imagery, or to various forms of information technology and Geographic Information Systems (GIS), including Public Participation GIS (PPGIS) and Participatory GIS (PGIS). Usually, the outcome of GIS-based approaches is a map or digital image based on mapped information (see Figure 32.2). Critical information from the public affected by proposed plans or projects, including Indigenous peoples’ knowledge, may also be incorporated in these visual tools to support assessment and decision-making processes (see Figure 32.3). If the participants are involved in the design of



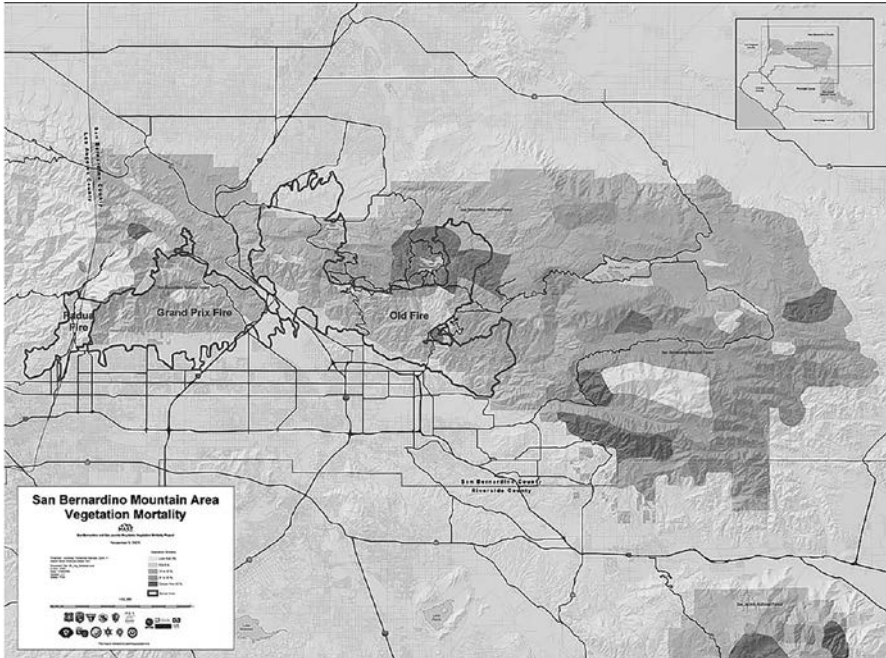
Source: Aerial photo detail based on IDAD (2018). Credit: © IDAD – Instituto do Ambiente e Desenvolvimento.

Figure 32.1 Location of a proposed project

the GIS approach, then these tools are known as interactive maps, allowing multiple players to incorporate data and comments. Often, interactive maps are combined with other visual tools such as photographs, videos, 3D models, and animation.

Photographs are used in many different ways and for various purposes, including:

- Photo elicitation and photovoice. These are qualitative approaches where participants document their observations with photographs. In photo elicitation, participants and/or practitioners produce photos, the meanings of which are later described by the participants in interviews (Kong et al., 2015). Photovoice is a particular form of photo elicitation where, after taking their photos, participants collaborate with practitioners and are empowered to take action, developing their own narratives, and determining which conclusions to report (see Figure 32.4). Through this collaboration, photovoice facilitates critical reflection with the following steps: participants contextualise and narrate their photographs; practitioners conduct data collection code issues, themes, and develop theories; and these elements are jointly verified, individually with each participant and with the participants as a group (Kong et al., 2015). The opportunity to photograph fosters a sense of ownership, pride,



Source: Retrieved 17 November 2021 from <http://www.esri.com/news/arcnews/winter0304articles/gis-helps.html>.

Figure 32.2 *Map produced through an emergency response GIS application in California, USA*

and satisfaction about their work. This method allows the disclosure of local knowledge, as well as of the actual needs and realities of local populations (Simmance et al., 2022).

- Photo preference surveys. With this method, stakeholders view and evaluate a series of photos, which depict a wide variety of plan or project elements. These could include alternative project design, alternative project sites, or different environmental constraints. Results from photo preference surveys can be used as input to design and plan community participatory processes, and can be incorporated in GIS-based approaches (Jiang et al., 2015).
- Photo visioning. This comprises manipulation of photos depicting existing conditions to simulate proposed changes (e.g. alternative natural and built environment scenarios). The objective is twofold: to help stakeholders understand different alternatives, and to foster public engagement (see Figure 32.5).

Visual narratives consist of storytelling by primary stakeholders (i.e. those with a direct interest in the resource) with the aid of visual tools such as photographs, drawings, satellite images, and videos (see Figure 32.6). Visual narratives can also promote public engagement (Lejano et al., 2013). They serve to: supplement the information supplied through other visual tools such as maps (AMAP, 2017); enhance access to information for illiterate or semi-literate individuals; solve conflicting interests; create new attitudes and opinions; and assist in the creation of visual storylines about controversial environmental or social policies or concerns



Source: Credit: © Amazon Conservation Team.

Figure 32.3 Participatory mapping with Indigenous communities in the Xingu Indigenous Park, Brazil



Source: Credit: © Álvaro Fernandes, CML-DRAUGI (Lisbon Municipal Council – Illegally-built Urban Areas Reconstruction Division).

Figure 32.4 Assessment of urban degraded areas with photovoice



Source: Credit: © Urban-Advantage.com.

Figure 32.5 Photo visioning: Urban development project in Calgary, Canada. (a) Existing conditions; (b) Transit and transit plaza; (c) Further nearby development

such as impacts or risks (Witteveen & Enserink, 2007). The outcomes from the use of visual narratives include: (i) strengthening the interpretation of discursive storylines; (ii) creating distinct interpretations of a single storyline; (iii) integrating different discursive storylines; or (iv) polarising between different discursive storylines and creating multiple visual storylines (Gommeh et al., 2021). Traditional and local knowledge, which is normally transmitted through narratives, may be critical to determine cumulative and potential future impacts that will shape future developments and adaptation strategies (AMAP, 2017).



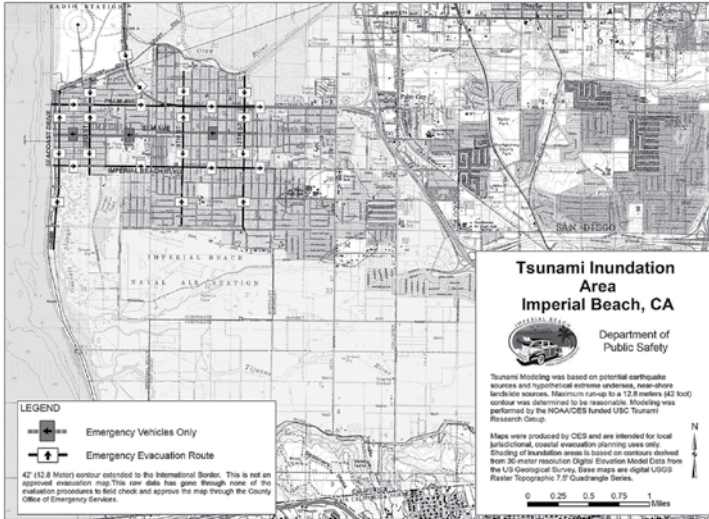
Source: Credit: © Witteveen, L., Van Tuyll, P., Santegoets, J., 2019. VPA Rhine River Branches. Van Hall Larenstein University of Applied Sciences. Retrieved 17 November 2021 from <https://vimeo.com/346093899>.

Figure 32.6 Video frame of VPA Rhine River Branches

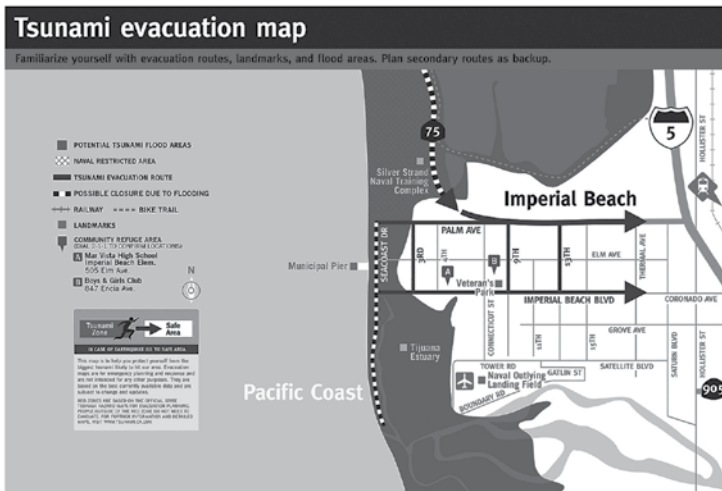
VISUAL TOOLS FOR CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE

Prior to describing the benefits of using visual tools in communication processes, it is important to briefly refer to the way humans process images and how this relates to emotions and decision-making. These considerations are pertinent when using visuals to engage participants in ESIA public participation and decision-making processes. Visualisations are more effective than words in conveying perceptions and feelings given that, in humans, the visual sense overrides the verbal sense (Resource Media, 2014). Indeed, ‘the parts of the brain that process visual information are evolutionarily older than the parts that process verbal information. Thus images evoke deeper elements of human consciousness [than] do words’ (Harper, 2002, p. 13). That explains why pictures, personal experiences, and vivid examples come to mind easier than incidents that happened to others, or mere words or statistics (Kahneman, 2011). This is commonly referred to as a ‘visual preference heuristic’, i.e., a preference for ‘visual rather than verbal depiction of stimuli’ (Townsend & Kahn, 2014, p. 1008). This is reflected in the way our brain and eyes are connected: ‘more than a million axons (nerve fibers) are dedicated to the optical nerve; by comparison, the number allocated to the auditory nerve is approximately 32,000’ (Gerard & Goldstein, 2005, p. 17).

An effective visualisation will facilitate quicker understanding and higher retention of relevant information. An improved understanding of issues may help people to make better decisions and thus result in better decision-making (Strecker, 2012). Strecker (2012, p. 7) argued that, in contrast to reading information in documents, ‘data visualizations shift the balance between seeing and thinking towards greater use of visual perception, taking fuller advantage of the brain’s abilities’. Although referring to emergency management, the example in Figure



9/18/06



Source: Credit: © Jaenichen (2017, p. 16).

Figure 32.7 Evacuation maps for Imperial Beach before (top image) and after (bottom image) the Visual Standards for TsunamiClear Evacuation Information was applied

32.7 is illustrative of the efforts to provide effective visualisations, which are reflected in the implementation of the Visual Standards for TsunamiClear Evacuation Information in California, USA (Jaenichen, 2017).

In addition to promoting better understanding, ‘visualisations capitalise on vision as our strongest sense for capturing attention, triggering emotion and employing rhetoric to convince us of arguments and ideas’ (Sleigh & Vayena, 2021, p. 2). While evoking powerful emotions, they drive decisions and actions (Resource Media, 2014). In a study of neurological patients who had accumulated defects in decision-making and disorders of emotion, Damasio (1994) hypothesised that, by creating dialogue, emotions assist the process of decision-making rather than disturb it. However, emotions cannot solve all problems and sometimes can be counter-productive, but in certain circumstances, they can assist reasoning. For example, emotion may favour intuition, allowing for decision-making without the need for calling for much knowledge. In the absence of emotions, reasoning is compromised, as is decision-making. ‘To know does not necessarily mean to feel’, meaning that the appropriate knowledge may be available, but the mechanism to enact an emotional response may be absent (Damasio, 1994, p. 211). The brain has the ‘ability to display images internally and to order those images in a process called thought’ (Damasio, 1994, p. 89). In fact, multiple intelligences, including emotional intelligence, depend on the capacity of the brain to create the visual–spatial–verbal schemas (i.e. mental models) that are needed to improve thinking and problem solving (Hyerle, 2009). To put it simply, ‘images are probably the main content of our thoughts’ (Damasio, 1994, p. 107).

It is not surprising that visual tools have the potential to lead to a multitude of desirable outcomes (see Figure 32.8), such as: attracting people for engagement; overcoming language barriers; stimulating sense-making by the public regarding available perspectives or alternatives; promoting reflection and inviting interpretation (Mintzberg & Westley, 2001; Strecker, 2012; Schoffelen et al., 2015). ‘Pictures make one stop and look, to take in different aspects of the image’ (Pain, 2012, p. 309). Visual tools help organise ideas and maps assist researchers in finding spatial relations between qualitative and quantitative data (Neuman, 2014). ‘We organize information on maps in order to see our knowledge in a new way. As a result, maps suggest explanations; and while explanations reassure us, they also inspire us to ask more questions, consider other possibilities. To ask for a map is to say, “tell me a story”’ (Turchi, 2004, p. 11). Visual tools can also be used to convey complex situations or ideas. ‘A descriptive image cuts through language barriers and provides a form of information that needs little or no translation’ (Gerard & Goldstein, 2005, p. 5). In ESIA processes, visual tools are recommended because:

A set of simple drawings can give both the big picture ... and the details ... A chart can illustrate how traffic volumes are growing faster than population better than a list of statistics. A ball chart can give the reader a quick and easy comparison of the pros and cons of project alternatives. A photograph clearly illustrates a sensitive view. (Page, 2006, p. 243)

For SIA, visual tools such as maps, pictures, and models are suggested ‘to explain different alternatives in a non-technical manner to inform the affected communities’ (Vanclay et al., 2015, p. 50). Also, Smyth and Vanclay (2017) suggest the use of diagrams to overcome the highly technical language in long and complex documents, and to effectively engage all stakeholders in environmental and social assessment.

Visual tools enable communication, represent data, enhance data quality and validity (Glegg, 2019), and have the potential to identify conflicts among stakeholders. For example,

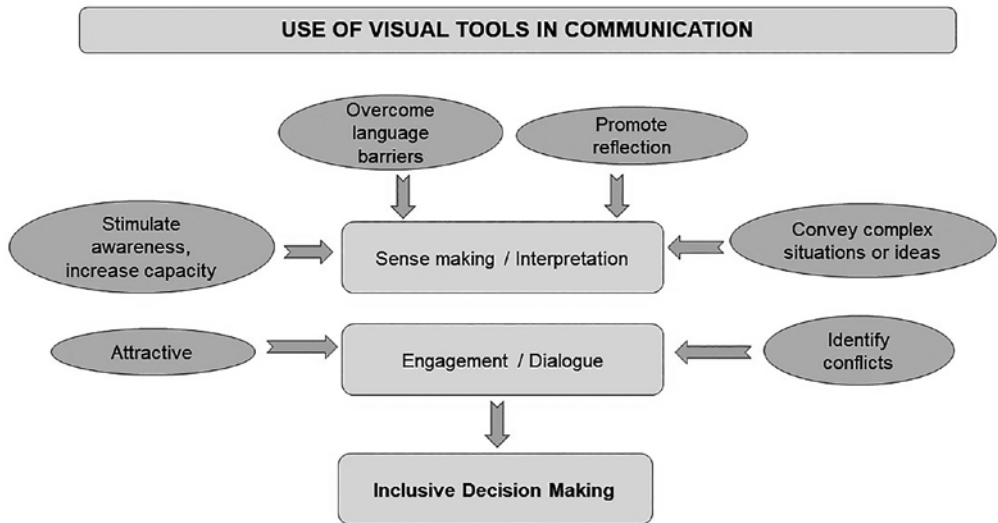


Figure 32.8 *Some effects of using visual tools in communication*

when using geovisualisations, i.e. realistic and geographically accurate representations of real-world places, what ‘people perceive as significant components of a place, how people feel a place should appear and be managed, and what types of development and activities are desirable or undesirable within a place’ may vary, and ‘in some cases, these differences might allude to or be reflective of potential user conflicts’ (Newell & Canessa, 2018, pp. 3, 29). Visual tools can also be used to effect change, for example ‘to stimulate awareness, increased capacity, action, transformation or other outcomes in response to visual outputs, through emotional connection, amplified voices, enhanced participant self-confidence or public advocacy’ (Glegg, 2019, p. 304). Emotional connection or emotional attachment to places can result from the visualisation of familiar or recognisable sites (Sheppard, 2012).

Overall, visual tools can be used to support an effective, meaningful, participatory, and strategic dialogue (Strecker, 2012), contributing to enhanced knowledge brokerage, transfer of research evidence into policy and practice (Ward et al., 2009), and to breaking down the barriers that impede interaction, healthy communication, and collaboration (Partidário & Sheate, 2013). In other words, visual tools can be used as mediators in public participation (Lie & Mandler, 2009), and invite interpretation (Mintzberg & Westley, 2001). It is essential that those who are involved in the selection of visual tools choose those tools ‘that not only speak to the mind but also to the heart’ (Metze, 2020, p. 754).

MULTILITERACY

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then a picture with text is worth 10,000 words. – Philippe Kahn, cited by Gerard & Goldstein (2005, p. 6).

Debating the superiority of images over words is not particularly fruitful as they do not constitute opposing notions, rather their complementarity is far more relevant (Pauwels, 2008).

Therefore, a brief note on multiliteracy is appropriate. Together with other representations of meaning (oral, musical, emotional, etc.), visuals and words are the building blocks of human literacy. While visual knowledge has always been primary to thought and expression, given the proliferation of new digital technologies, ‘image and text now interpenetrate one another’ (Grushka, 2010, p. 22), and they exist in an integrated, mutually enhancing relationship (Berger & Dyer, 2013). Therefore, the focus should be on how they interact with each other (Duncum, 2004). Hyerle (2009, p. 12) explained that there is a ‘cognitive dissonance between the highly constrained linear presentation of information’ as text ‘and the multidimensional mapping of mental models that the brain-mind naturally *performs* when processing and crafting information into knowledge.’ The role of visual tools, then, is to help find the patterns of thinking embedded in the text. When words and visuals are effectively paired, this enhances skills such as attention, memory, and recall, and increases believability. In what is known as ‘dual coding theory’, words and visuals reinforce each other (Resource Media, 2014), and the consequence of enhancing information processing and memorising is known as the ‘multimedia principle’ (Castro-Alonso et al., 2019).

VISUAL TOOLS SHOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO THE AUDIENCE

The potential of visual tools to engage stakeholders in a constructive dialogue was discussed above. Ideally, there needs to be a critical visual literacy developed within local communities. To effectively engage in conversations about scientific and technical issues, stakeholders should: (i) develop their capacity to think critically, including through the use of visual tools; (ii) understand how and why certain visuals are used; and (iii) critically interrogate the images used (Northcut, 2006). This critical visual literacy would foster greater understanding about projects and the impacts of projects on communities, as well as increase the capacity of communities to contribute to decision-making processes. Involvement in decision-making is an underlying condition in SIA’s core values: ‘People have a right to be involved in the decision making about the planned interventions that will affect their lives’; and ‘Local knowledge and experience are valuable and can be used to enhance planned interventions.’ It is also a specific principle of SIA: ‘Local knowledge and experience and acknowledgment of different local cultural values should be incorporated in any assessment’ (Vanclay, 2003, p. 9).

Although a wide range of visual tools – from basic drawings or photographs to complex and interactive maps from GIS-based approaches – is available, for various reasons their potential to promote engagement has been restricted. Among other factors, this is due to perceived negative technical, cognitive, social, or emotional effects of visual tools, and by the use of predetermined engagement models that are either ineffective for reflexive dialogue or that, in being pre-selected, fail to engage stakeholders in the choice and design of the visual tools to be used. Another issue relates to ethical dilemmas in the use of visualisations (see below).

The importance of using visual tools that are appropriate to those affected by proposed plans and projects is related to the need to involve the public in debate about the choice and design of the tools. The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) has a core value, that ‘public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate’ (see Chapter 20). An underlying assumption is that participative decision-making should be enriched with: Indigenous or local knowledge (including cultural and ethical values); percep-

tions regarding the project's impact on communities, ecosystems, and their interactions; and understanding of the way these may be represented through visual tools.

This need for community involvement has been widely documented. In one study, guidelines for climate change planning projects were developed, and two-dimensional maps and three-dimensional models were presented to the public for rating their effectiveness (Schroth et al., 2009). The public provided feedback about whether the visuals had been helpful in terms of: awareness and understanding of climate change impacts; and adaptation and mitigation options. These comments were considered for future participatory processes involving different target groups. In other studies, Emery (2000) and Baldwin et al. (2012) reported on a deeper level of involvement, where communities also participated in the design of the visual tools. Emery (2000) discussed how information records (maps, databases, GIS, etc.) were developed by Indigenous peoples as a way to involve them in the collection of information according to their own cultural system and in the way it would be communicated. In Honduras, the local population and practitioners co-designed a questionnaire about Indigenous land-use patterns to produce detailed maps of the region. In Paraguay, the co-design of land-use maps was facilitated because the local communities have a practice of sketching maps on the ground (Emery, 2000). Baldwin et al. (2012) described how Australian Indigenous communities participated in decision-making process to define the need, choice, and design of GIS-based tools for water resources planning. They also evaluated the suitability of a 3D model, regarding the context and purpose for which it was used (Baldwin et al., 2012). While the use of visual tools to represent Indigenous knowledge may bring valuable information to scientific studies, it may entail critical ethical dilemmas, which, if not properly addressed, may hinder the effectiveness of the visual tools being used.

ETHICAL ISSUES IN THE USE OF VISUAL TOOLS

Ethical concerns or dilemmas in the use of visual tools arise in a broad range of contexts such as: public health, biomedical research, environmental planning, natural resource management, as well as in environmental and social impact assessment. The ethical dilemmas may be specific to a location, culture, or social context, or may arise because of existing regulations, agreements or principles around ethical social research, including matters of confidentiality, the visual depiction of individuals, and the use of culturally sensitive information (e.g. Indigenous knowledge). There is a wide variety and complexity of ethical issues related to the use of visual tools (see Figure 32.9).

Important dilemmas stem from potential misinterpretations of the meaning and value of the data, and from the risk of cultural appropriation of the knowledge holders' intellectual property rights, that is, 'the use of a people's traditional dress, music, cuisine, knowledge and other aspects of their culture, without their approval, by members of a different culture' (Cultural Appropriation of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, 2000). In fact, names of places, when mapped, may not have the cultural and knowledge context for other users, requiring knowledge interactions and new narratives among stakeholders. Such misinterpretations may be aggravated by the complexity of some visual tools, such as GIS. Tesar et al. (2019) discussed the development of an online GIS tool for the Arctic (known as North Water Polynya or Pikialasorsuaq Atlas), which merged scientific knowledge with Inuit Indigenous knowledge, and presented valuable insights and solutions to these ethical dilemmas. The Inuit's 'deep

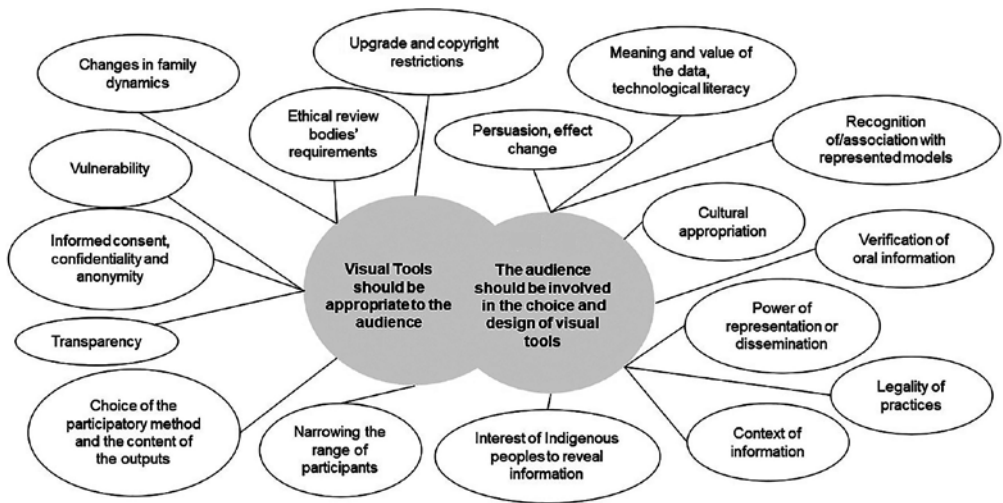


Figure 32.9 Ethical dilemmas of community involvement in providing local knowledge to, and in the choice and design of, visual tools

understanding and close relationship with the Arctic Ocean environment, especially with one of the most salient features of the ocean, its sea-ice dynamics' (Tesar et al., 2019, p. 14) was very valuable to the scientific community for their understanding of the ecological and cultural importance of Arctic sea-ice. The inclusive nature of the visual participatory method contributed to enhancing the wider public's awareness of this area. In order to avoid misinterpretation in mapping Inuit knowledge, it was suggested that knowledge holders should be notified about the potential use of their knowledge and given the power to directly influence the analysis and re-interpretation of their data, 'especially if the intended users are someone outside the original cultural or geographical context' (Tesar et al., 2019, p. 20). They also suggested that the potential dilemma of ownership and control of traditional or Indigenous knowledge, including oral information, can be addressed by assigning intellectual property rights to the knowledge holders.

Similar ethical dilemmas were revealed by Eyþórsson and Thuestad (2015) who analysed map-based survey methods to assess land and resource use in the context of EIA. Their surveys were conducted in Norway, and involved accessing the knowledge of the Sámi Indigenous peoples. While studying the methodological, ethical, and practical challenges of incorporating (through collection and processing) Indigenous knowledge, Eyþórsson and Thuestad (2015) identified interconnected issues such as: (i) verification of oral information (before it is translated into map layers); (ii) the power of representation or dissemination; and (iii) the legality of practices and their influence on landscape evaluation in planning. Processing the spatial information (maps) from the survey in a GIS, with map references and place names in different languages (Sámi and Norwegian), proved to be a challenge to the technicians and planners unfamiliar with local knowledge and language. In addition to issues of ownership and control of Indigenous knowledge, there is the question of 'who is in a position to represent it correctly and how it should be disseminated and stored' (Eyþórsson & Thuestad, 2015, p. 144).

The issue of correct representation of Indigenous knowledge is well-known in Canada, for example, where boundaries of neighbouring Canadian First Nations communities' traditional lands, albeit required by the treaty process, were contested, ill-defined, and not enforced (Corbett, 2009). Firm boundaries are typically drawn on maps, suggestive of a sense of authority, inflexibility, and permanency, which leads to tension and conflicts within and among those communities. Thus, a broad, intra- and inter-community approach, with a collaborative discussion and negotiation of land and resource use is required to resolve such conflicts.

Eyþórsson and Thuestad (2015) also identified the dilemma of maps representing land and natural resources use by the surveyed Indigenous families, which are merely illustrations of information related to practices and are not necessarily legally verified. Once incorporated in the visual tool, such information has the power to influence planning decisions. Additional ethical dilemmas include the use of Indigenous information out of context, and also the self-interests of Indigenous peoples in revealing (or not) their past or current land use and resource management practices.

While reporting on the use of participatory visual-based approaches (e.g. photovoice, photo elicitation, digital storytelling), in global health research, Black et al. (2018) identified a series of potential ethical concerns, such as narrowing the range of participants due to effort and time constraints; the choice of the participatory method and the content of the outputs; and protection of the identity of participants. Two additional concerns also stand out: vulnerability, and change in family dynamics. Participants' vulnerability may be exposed by disclosing their different cultural or scientific beliefs, or by reinforcing damaging stereotypes. In these cases, participants may choose to remain anonymous or make up their life stories or accounts of their personal practices or challenges (e.g. eating habits). Regarding changes in family dynamics, public participation inclusive of children and their parents may introduce changes in family dynamics in the long term. A photovoice project in the Philippines involved the Palawan ethnic group, where interaction and decision-making among their members was strongly influenced by gender and relative age. Although short-term effects (behavioural changes) of including younger participants in the use of visual tools was acknowledged, long-term relationships at home could be at risk. The respect for elders is well illustrated by a participant who stated: 'Adults have eaten more rice meals in their lives' (Black et al., 2018, p. 25). Parsons et al. (2016) expressed an opposing view, referring to the positive effects in co-creating research, stemming from the recognition of different kinds of knowledge held by different people (elders and young people), as well as in different social structures (extended family, sub-tribe, and tribe) in New Zealand.

In addition to the need to address ethical review committee requirements, the selection of visual tools by the communities may require compromises with the process facilitators (Black et al., 2018). In a GIS experiment involving village community groups to test the feasibility of their involvement in participatory mapping tools, Wood (2005) acknowledged the importance of establishing partnerships with the organisations that act as facilitators of the community involvement.

The capacity of visual tools to effect change may pose ethical dilemmas, especially around persuasion. Sheppard (2001, 2012) argued that, while a moral obligation to take an advocacy role is often felt, careful consideration should be given to the ethical dilemma of using visualisation and visioning processes for the purposes of persuasion. While the credibility of the visualisations is important, both to the public and to the experts involved, there are various strategies that can be applied to counteract the undesirable persuasion effect: community

involvement in the development of socio-economic scenarios; development and application of rules to visualise the scenarios; development of visualisations; and the possibility to interact with and critically question the visualisations and datasets.

Participatory visual methodologies using videos, photos (photovoice), and visual narratives (or storytelling) are often used in communities familiar with these visual tools. A basic principle of ethics when dealing with images is the specific permission (informed consent) to produce images (photographs or videos). In addition to compliance with the applicable privacy regulation, permission from the depicted participants should be sought in advance (Vanclay et al., 2013). In an assessment of the literature on the use of visualisations by community health workers in North America and sub-Saharan Africa, O'Donovan et al. (2019) identified some additional and often-disregarded ethical considerations. These range from lack of reporting on transparency, informed consent, confidentiality, and long-term impact (effect change) of the use of visuals (social action and social change), to an over-reliance on the use of technology in poor areas or areas with low technological literacy. As a solution to this, O'Donovan et al. (2019) advocated the use of low-technology visual tools, such as maps and drawings. An additional and not usually mentioned ethical dilemma deals with the lack of understanding about the potential impact of visuals (videos and images used in storytelling) that show people not known to the participating communities. Indeed, the lack of association or recognition of the models presented in the visuals may hinder the emotional connection, or emotional attachment required for public engagement and interpretation, and may actually constitute a negative social impact.

CONCLUSION

Visual tools have the potential to stimulate sense-making, promote reflection, and invite interpretation. This is useful in participatory approaches where affected communities participate and enhance decision-making processes with their valuable local knowledge and experience. To ensure the effectiveness of visual tools, it is advisable to involve local communities in their choice and design, as well as in providing local knowledge. Concurrently, potential ethical dilemmas associated with the use of images, which may be specific to each community, should be identified. Ethical dilemmas to the use of visualisations are multiple, intersecting, and may refer to members of communities or/and to practitioners. While strategies can be sometimes devised to counteract ethical concerns (e.g. using less complex visual tools, promoting or developing visual literacy, omitting sensitive images, obtaining permission to use images), more complex ethical dilemmas should be pondered and addressed by qualified SIA practitioners together, when applicable, with the affected communities or their lawful representatives. Finally, ethical dilemmas (e.g. changes in family dynamics, vulnerability) may not derive from the visualisation per se, but from the participatory process or cultural and social context in which they are used. SIA practitioners should then address the complementary causes of ethical dilemmas, devising, if necessary, an alternative communication medium.

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33. Immersive technologies: new ways to visualise a possible future world

José Corraliza Miranda

INTRODUCTION: MESSAGE, CODE, AND CHANNEL

Imagine that you were asked to evaluate the musical quality of the score in Figure 33.1. Unless you are one of the small percentage of people with advanced musical skills, you probably would be in a great predicament and would not be able to give an informed answer. However, if someone who could read music were to play the score for you on a piano or other musical instrument, or even whistle it, you probably would recognise the very popular classical piece by Ludwig van Beethoven, *Für Elise*. Your problem then is not that you cannot enjoy the melody, nor appreciate its quality; your issue is that you do not know the language in which the message is encoded and therefore you cannot decipher it properly.



Figure 33.1 The musical score of Beethoven's *Für Elise*

In all fields of knowledge, codes are used to help us define, preserve, and above all communicate our ideas to others, and to be able to understand the ideas of others in the group. It is on this shared knowledge base that the entire culture of humankind has been built since the beginning of time. However, the effectiveness of this system depends on both sender and

receiver having knowledge of the code being used, and an adequate communication channel for the message to be transmitted. Given that a fundamental part of Social Impact Assessment (SIA) consists of communication between the different actors involved in the development of the project in question, and meaningful transmission of that knowledge to the wider public, it is essential to have a communication channel and code to share messages that are effective and transparent.

When it comes to explaining something, we all know that a picture is worth a thousand words. But, what is better than a picture? One answer is an ‘immersive image’: an image into which we can enter and be a part of; where the information is clearly presented before our eyes; and where we can effortlessly understand the messages being communicated. When we want to acquire an expensive product, such as a house or a vehicle, we would not think of buying it without taking a good look at it first: we visit the property or dealership, we see it with our own eyes, we move around in it, we touch it and feel it, and we take pictures. However, when it comes to comprehending something that does not yet exist, we do not have that possibility. We have to take a riskier approach based on incomplete, less-reliable information, and where we have to trust our imagination. This causes some uncertainty, which leads to a sense of risk since we are not sure whether what we will get at the end of the process will be what we expected. There is a degree of indeterminacy that allows misunderstandings to occur.

There is an inalienable right for the public to participate in the decision-making of planned interventions (especially public sector projects) that may affect their way of life (see Chapter 20). But how can we make sure that this community engagement is done genuinely and meaningfully, and how can we guarantee that all involved parties have complete and understandable information? The answer is: only by ensuring that all participants truly understand the transformation that will occur because of the project and all implications that arise from this. Removing all technical barriers that may limit or cloud understanding of the project so that the final picture is presented in the most honest way possible is also important.

We must guarantee that all stakeholders, especially affected communities and others interested in the social impacts of the proposed project, have all the tools at their disposal to obtain a full understanding of the entire process: the inconveniences, the disturbances, the expected problems, the deadlines in which the different phases are going to be executed, the costs, and of course all the beneficial outcomes and advantages that the project, once completed, will have on their lives and livelihoods. Involving the community in a transparent and ongoing manner from the earliest stages of any intervention is essential to gain the trust of local communities. But it is not only a matter of trust, honesty, and fairness; it is also the most efficient way to reduce resistance and any problems that may later arise due to misunderstandings, which may lead to boycotts, delays, increase project costs, and potentially even derail the whole project (Hanna et al., 2016).

As an architect currently working in the AECOM office in Madrid, I have been using immersive technologies to enhance communication with all stakeholders involved in projects. This chapter is primarily a reflection on our experiences with visualisation and new technologies and their huge potential application in environmental and social impact assessment.

WHAT ARE IMMERSIVE TECHNOLOGIES?

Over the last few decades, the increasing use of computers for both domestic and professional purposes has dramatically changed life and the way things are done, intervening in all areas of human activity (Northmore & Hudson, 2022). Impact assessment practice has not been exempted from this digitisation, as evidenced, for example, by the development of digital impact assessment tools and guidelines around their use (IEMA, 2020; Fothergill & Murphy, 2021). Technology is changing the way we think, conceive, design, and assess projects, and is also changing the way we perceive projects and communicate about them to our colleagues and clients, and even how we analyse, monitor, and manage the outcomes from projects. In comparison to traditional design layouts, perspectives, or 3D scale models, immersive technologies will increasingly become the channel that conveys messages, and in increasingly effective ways. One big advantage is that immersive technologies do not require any specific technical training to understand the message, since the code used is the same as those we use in our everyday lives. To convey the message, immersive technologies use our own natural senses, such as sight and hearing, and even potentially touch and smell. No technical, language, or intellectual barrier exists between the sender and receiver of the content.

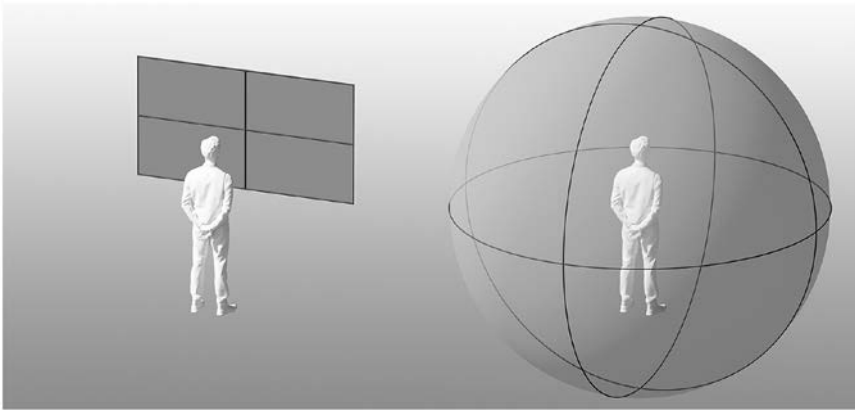
The new tools provided by immersive technologies are relevant to all phases of the project and to all stages of the impact assessment process. They can be applied at any time, not only to raise awareness among future beneficiaries or impacted people, but also to assist in the participation of key stakeholders at early stages of projects, including affected communities, project assessors, financiers, project management staff, and corporate executives. To validate the design and make adjustments and improvements in this ‘sandbox’, visualising the final state of the proposal before it is implemented can be of great benefit, both in initial planning and in gaining the approval of all parties (see Figure 33.2).



Note: In this example, virtual reality helped those involved to get a better vision of how a natural area that had been neglected would be recovered by using local vegetation as well as the final appearance of the proposed intervention.
Source: AECOM.

Figure 33.2 Virtual reality representation of before (left) and after (right) situations from a soil remediation project

Throughout history, when human beings have used graphic representation methods to communicate an idea, they have generally had to use a two-dimensional base on which to represent the elements they wanted to express. From prehistoric cave drawings to Hollywood blockbusters, there has been a physical barrier between the work and the viewer. That barrier could be the surface of a canvas, a movie, or a computer screen – a 2D window we could view to connect with the artist’s content. Immersive technologies break this restricted perspective and offer the viewer a totally different way of relating to the content. Now we are not external observers contemplating the work from a detached point of view, but we are immersed in it, it surrounds us completely, and we are absorbed into it (see Figure 33.3).



Source: AECOM.

Figure 33.3 Traditional 2D graphic representation versus immersive representation

Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), Mixed Reality (MR), and Extended Reality (XR) are all included in the set of immersive technologies. While they are often muddled up, there are nuances that differentiate them. The term ‘virtual reality’ was popularised by Jaron Lanier, a pioneer in the field, who, together with Thomas Zimmerman, founded VPL Research Inc. in 1985, the first company to sell VR headsets and gloves. VR consists of replacing the physical reality that surrounds the user with an alternative reality that is digitally generated. The immersion is total and the user loses contact with the physical world and dips completely into a new reality. This new reality is in charge of supplying the brain with stimuli to make the participant feel fully immersed in a virtual three-dimensional environment. To achieve this, ‘head mounted displays’ (HMDs) or headsets covering the eyes are used to provide alternative images to the brain that replace those of the physical environment. For this illusion to work, the new reality must perform coherently in terms of spatial depth and the movements of our head and body. Auditory stimuli corresponding to this virtual world are provided, and ideally also other senses, such as touch and smell, can be simulated and incorporated into the VR experience. The greater the number of senses involved, the deeper the feeling of immersion.

In contrast to VR, with Augmented Reality (AR) experiences, the participant does not lose connection with their physical reality, which continues to be perceived normally. Additional

information generated by a computer is superimposed onto physical reality as an extra layer enriching perception. Thus, reality is augmented with additional information, leading to greater comprehension. The displayed information is intrinsically linked to reality, and is overlaid onto it in a coherent way in terms of spatial perception, depth, and perspective so that it is perceived as perfectly integrated into our physical space. An increasing use of this is in museum settings, with many museums or cultural heritage institutions using augmented reality to help visitors comprehend what they are seeing and to appreciate what it was like in another era (Damala et al., 2013; Nee & Ong, 2023).

Mixed Reality (MR) experiences are very similar to Augmented Reality experiences and are often confused with each other. The difference is that, in an AR experience, the layer of extra information is superimposed onto the participant's reality but is not mixed with it; whereas, in an MR experience, we go a step further with the computer considering the three-dimensionality of our reality to merge it with the three-dimensionality of the virtual world creating a single environment that is shown to the participant. Finally, Extended Reality (XR) is an umbrella term that encompasses all combinations of the immersive experiences described above.

BENEFITS OF USING IMMERSIVE TECHNOLOGIES

Immersive technologies are among the range of digital tools used in impact assessment. These tools are especially relevant at the stakeholder engagement stage and are a key group of digital solutions among the surge of digital impact assessment approaches. The established advantages of digital tools in impact assessment include: enhanced communication, especially in an accessible, interactive, transparent, and personalised way; and having the possibility to access information at any time, from anywhere, as long as a device with Internet connection is available (Digital EIA Project Partners, 2020).

AECOM's Madrid office started using VR in 2015 to explain our proposal for a logistics building in an architectural competition. Once we experienced the enormous virtues of this new technology, we began using it in most projects, whether they be engineering, architecture, interior design, urban planning, or environmental projects. In my work as an architect, I have often encountered situations where people (even professionals), when visiting a built work for the first time, have been surprised that it was different to how they imagined it was going to be (sometimes smaller, sometimes larger, or different in other ways). Occasionally, this difference in outcome potentially affected the intended functionality of the building in question. Just like imagining the melody from a musical score, a professional has to make a big effort to translate what is represented in a plan to imagine what that space is going to be like after it is constructed. Often, they can be surprised by certain aspects that had not been fully considered until they see it actually built. If a person with training to conceive the dimensions of space and great capacity for spatial vision still has trouble imagining how it will 'feel' once built, how can we expect that people without that training can ever come close to adequately imagining the built project, even with minimum accuracy?

With the advent of immersive technologies, the gap between the vision and reality has been narrowed and we now have the tools to validate our designs from a spatial point of view without having to lay a single brick. The ways by which an architect can conceive and share a three-dimensional design to colleagues and clients has taken a great leap forward. With a virtual reality headset, one can have a sense of scale, depth, and presence in the projected

space that was not possible with traditional tools. The VR hardware produces emotional responses in our brain such that we believe we are actually inside that three-dimensional space, making this experience very close to what it would be like to be physically inside the proposed development. Immersive technologies are very valuable during the whole design stage to effectively validate the quality of the design, to explore different options, and to correct flaws.

THE CURRENT STATE OF THE ART OF IMMERSIVE TECHNOLOGY

Although virtual reality started to be used in a limited way in the 1980s and some interesting applications began to appear, its initial implementation was restricted due to its high cost and the poor quality of graphics. Consequently, there was not widespread diffusion of the technology. Since then, however, the enormous increase in processing power in computer systems, especially in graphics cards, has made the technology mature enough to make a virtual reality simulator something very affordable for any company dedicated to engineering or construction. In fact, I find it inconceivable that this ‘life insurance’ (of being able to see what the finished product will be like) is not systematically used with all large projects, which can easily cost millions or even billions of dollars.

The standardised protocol for ‘Building Information Modelling’ (BIM) (CIC, 2018) has greatly optimised the construction process at all stages of a project’s development by addressing key issues such as time schedule, costs, environment, and maintenance throughout the life of a building. However, in terms of aiding the perception of space, sense of proportion, scale, and aesthetic features, BIM is not as helpful as XR. Designing a building using BIM software that enables modelling the building in 3D is not the same as experiencing that building from the inside and to be able to feel its sense of scale at human dimension. Thus, XR applications that connect with the BIM environment are useful in that they offer the best of both worlds by being able to retrieve information from the BIM models and input it into the VR environment. If the information flows are bidirectional, the efficiency is maximised by being able to make corrections in the VR environment that will be registered in the BIM software for subsequent follow-up.

Apart from being able to use immersive technologies in the design phase of a project, e.g. to detect faults or deficiencies at the early stages, these tools can also be used to check that the works are being executed with the appropriate precision. Using augmented reality, we can superimpose the BIM model onto the current state of construction to check whether there is conformity with the design, or if there is some kind of mismatch from a geometric or temporal point of view. One-click solutions that switch from the BIM model to the VR model without having to worry about anything other than wearing the VR headset already exist.

Interactive VR Experiences versus 360° VR Tours

There are various kinds of VR experiences, which can be grouped into two types: first, interactive VR experiences where a three-dimensional model is used in which one can move around interacting with any objects present; and second, 360° VR tours, which provide an experience generated from 360° photospheres, also called panoramas (see Figure 33.4). Each type has its advantages and disadvantages, which are discussed below.



Source: AECOM.

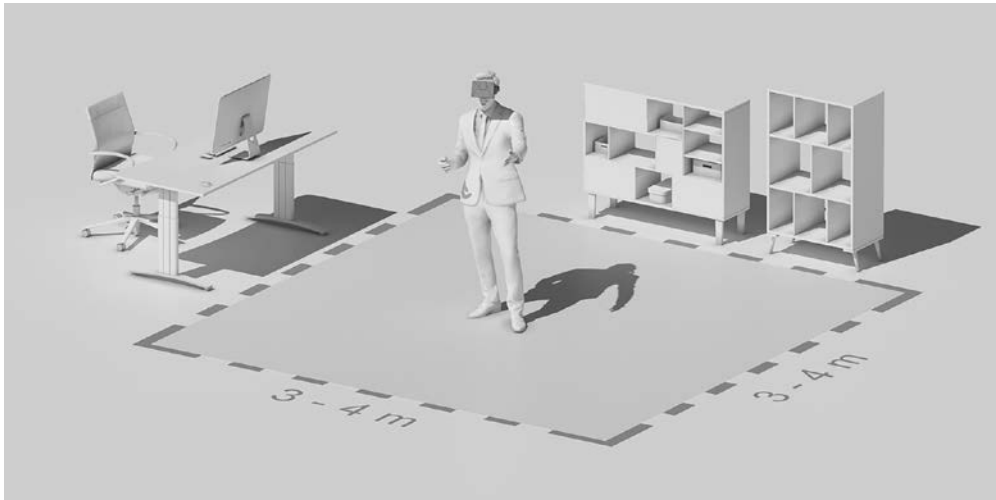
Figure 33.4 Image from a 360° VR tour of Larnaca Port & Marina Development designed by AECOM Spain

In interactive VR experiences, the immersive experience is more complete and more impressive than a 360° VR tour, because one can go through any point of the space at will. With a little additional programming, we can make the users interact with the objects, the materials being displayed, choose the type of lighting (day or night), try alternative designs, etc. For such a complete experience, however, advanced VR hardware connected to a sufficiently powerful computer is required to run the virtual environment satisfactorily. This type of set-up, which requires more preparation and powerful hardware, is appropriate for events, trade shows, or when placed semi-permanently in a physical environment, whereas 360° VR tours are relatively more portable and can be used in the field or when visiting clients or stakeholders.

As their name suggests, 360° VR tours are composed of spherical images and a navigation system that allows a user to move from one place/image setting to another. Immersive images taken with a special camera are used of those points of the project that are most relevant. In their immersion experience, all a user can do is to stay in these specific points and move their head in any direction, and it is not possible to interact with the objects, nor to move anywhere at will. However, if the quality of the images is good enough, and stereoscopic images are used, the sensation of depth and scale can be quite convincing, as it can sometimes be in a stereoscopic IMAX film. For 360° VR tours, the headset can be relatively basic and does not need to be connected to an external computer, making it a portable system easy to take to a client's office or to the construction site. These experiences are very simple and inexpensive to produce, easily upgradeable, and can be conveniently hosted on an internet server for easy sharing. They can also be run with a VR headset, or with any device with internet access such as computers, smartphones, or tablets. Given its convenience and increasing quality, the rate

of adoption has been exponential, and 360° VR tours are becoming a dynamic, interactive, and safe way to captivate the interest of colleagues and clients.

The best way to move in an interactive VR experience is by walking around, our most natural way of moving, and the one that gives us the greater ‘sense of presence’. However, except in exceptional cases, in VR contexts, the area available for moving around is usually limited to a few square metres in the real world (see Figure 33.5). Given that the desired dimensions of the virtual environment tend to be much larger than that, we need some other way to move around in our virtual world. So far, teleporting has proven to be the most intuitive and convenient method to do this, with the user using a hand-held controller to point to the spot they want to go, and pressing a button to initiate teleportation to that position.



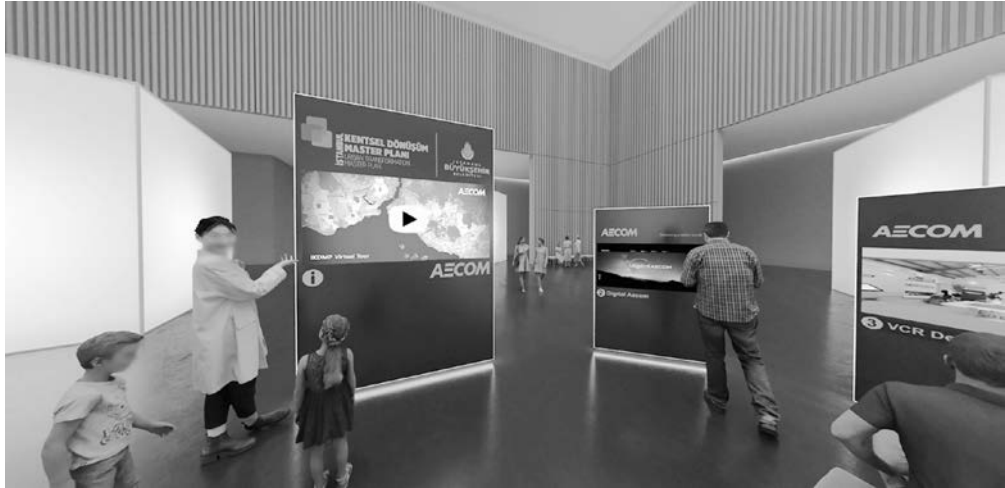
Source: AECOM.

Figure 33.5 *A typical set-up for a VR experience*

Virtual Consultation Rooms

Traditionally, when project staff or their consultants wanted to communicate information to the general public about a major project that could affect their environment or their way of life, a physical space was set up for this purpose, such as a showroom or open house, where information would be publicly displayed in the form of large printed panels, scale models, and other types of physical documentation. Today, all this can be done more effectively, efficiently, and quickly by using the internet and immersive technologies. Now, ‘virtual consultation rooms’ (VCRs) replace those physical showrooms, providing all that information online and making it much more accessible, since it is no longer necessary to physically go to a showroom, but can be consulted from the comfort of one’s own home, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. If the visit to the VCR website is done with a virtual reality headset, the experience can be superior to that of a traditional visit to a physical room, because one can also have the experience of immersively visiting the project, and thus gain a more comprehensive understanding of it.

Immersive technologies are not intended to completely replace face-to-face stakeholder engagement, but rather to complement it. In order to build relationships, respect cultures, and establish trust, face-to-face interaction is still essential when engaging with local communities, and especially Indigenous peoples and seldom-heard or hard-to-reach groups (Fothergill & Murphy, 2021). Immersive technologies can be used as complementary tools along with face-to-face interactions. However, in extraordinary circumstances when face-to-face interaction may not be viable, immersive technologies have provided an effective means to carry out engagement, as was the case during pandemic times with the AECOM's Virtual Consultation Room being configured just like an Open House (see Figure 33.6).



Note: This was the entry used for the CONEIA22 event (XI National Congress of Environmental Impact Assessment). AECOM's global VCR can be accessed at: <https://architecturedesign.aecom.io/projects>.
Source: AECOM.

Figure 33.6 Example of an entry to a Virtual Consultation Room

Collaborative Spaces and Design Review

When using VR to share a project with stakeholders or interested others, a problem typically encountered till recently was that the person immersed in the virtual environment experienced a sense of isolation and disorientation. If the headset wearer was familiar with VR experiences, this was not usually significant because they could generally cope. However, if the user was a novice, as usually happens when demonstrating these tools to large audiences, despite being impressed, they tended not to know what to expect from the situation, what they can do, what things they cannot do, and they were likely to feel somewhat self-conscious and out-of-place. To fully enjoy the experience, a companion who shares the virtual world with them and helps them, from the inside, to manage in this environment is needed. This guide would accompany the new user on their journey, resolving their doubts about the technology, and assist in explaining the project that is being depicted. In fact, the experience thus becomes a guided tour, making a much more complete and pleasant experience for an inexperienced user.

An obvious situation that can take advantage of immersive technologies is remote meetings. Instead of meeting through a flat screen, it is possible to share a common virtual space similar to meeting in a real physical environment. This would lead to people participating more, interacting with colleagues in a real-life way, and lead to better outcomes from meetings. It is possible to incorporate in this virtual space all the elements that are normally part of meetings, as well as aspects that would be specific to this format. There are already several applications on the market for this purpose, including Spatial (www.spatial.io), Horizon Workrooms (www.meta.com/work/workrooms), and AltspaceVR (www.altvr.com).

Besides being useful to visualise a finished project and share it with colleagues and clients, virtual reality is a useful tool to check the effectiveness of a design as it is being developed. It can be helpful when incorporated from inception of the design process, especially in those projects developed by a team, where accurate communication between colleagues is especially relevant. In this context, the realism of imagery and graphic quality are not necessarily critical; more important is the system's capability to enable collaborators to perceive the space as faithfully as possible and be able to co-design in the same virtual environment, modifying dimensions, changing the lighting, construction materials, furnishings, and so on. Of course, the members of the design team do not have to be in the same physical location. They may even be in different countries or continents, but in this virtual environment, they will work and feel as if they were together in person.

The Metaverse

The term 'metaverse' was coined by the American writer Neal Stephenson (1992) in his novel *Snow Crash*. Etymologically, it comes from the Greek term '*meta*' meaning 'beyond', and '*verse*' referring to the universe. In other words, it literally means 'the universe beyond', or a reality far greater than what we currently perceive. Despite its potential vastness, the metaverse will still be a kind of virtual universe that will serve as a stage for all kinds of human interactions. It will also be a 'virtual sandbox' in which to play and experiment, with much less risk than in the real world. In the novel *Neuromancer*, Gibson (1984) suggested that it probably will not be hyperreal graphics or elaborate avatars that will make 'cyberspace' (his term equivalent to the metaverse) more widely accepted by the general public, but the possibility of interacting with other people in real time, in a normal way, and without hassle. Future applications of the metaverse are yet to be fully determined and currently are more speculation than anything else, as it really is a work-in-progress. What will be interesting is not only how to assess the social impacts *of* the metaverse, but also how to assess social impacts *in* the metaverse environment and community, given that the metaverse will likely become a kind of parallel universe where people will invest much time, energy, and money, and to which they potentially will develop place attachment.

USING VIRTUAL REALITY SAFELY AND FOR INCREASED SAFETY

Notwithstanding its beneficial aspects, as with other stakeholder engagement techniques, the use of immersive technologies in impact assessment is not exempt from potential issues. The 'digital divide' is a concept that often arises in discussions about digital impact assessment. It

refers to the global and local inequalities in access and use of digital technologies and digital content (Unwin & de Bastion, 2009). For example, older people and some other groups in society may have less interest or capacity to use digital tools than other people (Northmore & Hudson, 2022). When using any method or form of technology, SIA and other practitioners must consider the impacts of the use of that technique, especially on the rates, representativeness, and quality of participation by all the different groups in society, and on people's right to participate.

Not everyone reacts the same way when they experience virtual reality. Each person has their own threshold of tolerance for these types of experiences, and all must approach it gradually until they get used to it. In industry circles, it is often said that we have to '*grow our VR legs*' as a metaphor for getting used to this technology. Some people think that the satisfaction of an immersive experience is closely linked to the level of realism achieved, or how close to reality the images look. While there is some truth to this, another factor is even more important: the ease and seamlessness of the technical performance of the equipment affect the user's experience. The most important thing about a virtual experience is not that it is hyperrealistic; rather that it is comfortable for the user who is experiencing it. There is no point in showing a beautifully designed and rendered project if it does not play smoothly when displayed. It would be much better to present a less detailed project, but have a perfectly smooth virtual environment. Even though the graphical representation would be simplified, a more powerful sensation of presence, a sense of being there, would be achieved, and the experience would be more enjoyable and effective. To ensure that there is no discomfort to users, there must be the right combination of hardware power and optimal graphics quality, and it must be tested thoroughly before making the experience available to the wider public.

Overuse of virtual reality has led to some issues for some users, although with technological advances in the latest headsets, graphics cards, and other equipment, this is becoming less of a concern. Even so, until a person is used to these experiences, it is best that the sessions are done sitting down, are no longer than 15 or 20 minutes, and that the session should be stopped at the first sign of discomfort or unease. Short experiences are better as they also reduce any eyestrain that might be caused by the headset. The connection cable linking the headset to the computer used to be a concern, as it was a potential tripping hazard and restricted freedom of movement. Nowadays, stand-alone headsets have eliminated this issue, either because the headset on its own is powerful enough for the application, or because the connection to the computer is made wirelessly (e.g. with Wi-Fi). Potentially, there is a danger of colliding with objects in the real environment while being immersed in the virtual world. The various manufacturers have a range of solutions for this potential problem, but normally what is done, as mentioned earlier, is to delimit an obstacle-free space the user will utilise in the immersion experience (see Figure 33.5), with the headset configured to warn the user when they are approaching the limits of the safe area.

Not all VR experiences are equal, some are potentially more 'dizzying' than others. Usually, those related to architectural or urban environments are more comfortable for users than, for example, a roller-coaster simulator. It seems inappropriate to complain about being dizzy on a VR roller-coaster if one is prone to being dizzy on a real roller-coaster. The issue here is not the system per se, but the nature of the content and the user's tolerance for motion and certain other experiences, e.g. sound and light effects. Thus, people with epilepsy-related disorders and various other medical conditions should be especially careful when using this technology, as some light patterns or other stimuli could affect them (ANSES, 2021).

Despite these issues, VR is quite safe. It is also a technology that is being used for a wide range of purposes, including medical applications, and as a training tool for personnel working in risky environments (Nee & Ong, 2023). VR allows people to gain skills and experience about situations that involve risk without compromising their own safety or that of others (Sacks et al., 2013). VR is also being used in psychological therapies, for example to confront people with their phobias or traumas and help them overcome them (Difede et al., 2007).

CONCLUSION: THE EMPATHY MACHINE?

Immersive technologies have much to offer. The market for this technology has been growing exponentially and it is likely this will continue in the coming years. The expected global market size of VR and AR is forecast to hit US \$250 billion by 2028, up from \$28 billion in 2021 (Alsop, 2022). In his book *Experience on Demand*, Bailenson (2018) discussed immersive experiences and argued that VR provides much greater engagement with the public than traditional methods of public participation. He argued that in today's world, it's hard to keep people's attention, and by creating captivating VR experiences, people stay engaged for longer than would otherwise be the case. I believe these technologies have become very effective tools when it comes to sharing a project with all stakeholders, and they enable this to be done in an engaging and transparent way.

Perhaps the most powerful feature of VR is the ability to put ourselves in the shoes of others, to see things from the perspective of people who may be different from ourselves in terms of culture, education, way of life, and other characteristics that influence how we perceive and understand the world around us. This great characteristic of virtual reality, which makes it rather unique, has led some authors to call this technology 'the empathy machine' (Milk, 2015). While there are some detractors (Hassan, 2020; Raz, 2022; Sora-Domenjó, 2022), there have also been many experiments that have shown how, through the use of these tools, a person can empathise, as never before, with the circumstances and point of view of others (Herrera et al., 2018; Bujic et al., 2020).

From a social impact assessment perspective, making all stakeholders at all phases of the project lifecycle aware of the consequences of construction of the project is critical to improve the analysis, decision-making, management, and achievement of desirable outcomes from projects. Immersive technologies can be a key tool to help spread awareness to wider audiences. Some researcher-activists are using VR to raise social consciousness about the need to take care of the planet. For example, in collaboration with the United Nations and climate experts, 'XR impact', a non-profit organisation, has developed a virtual reality experience called 'Be Earth' (<https://xrimpact.com/be-earth/>), in which the deterioration of the Amazon rainforests caused by human activity can be fully appreciated. Today, there are more and more initiatives aimed at spreading environmental awareness to as many people as possible, and immersive technologies have become a key tool for this purpose. Hopefully, with this assistance by immersive technologies, there will be a worldwide increase in environmental awareness that will assist restoring the earth to the path of sustainability. Also, immersive technologies have considerable potential to reduce the negative social impacts experienced by people and to contribute to enhanced outcomes.

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34. Building connections between impact and benefit agreements and environmental and social impact assessment

Ginger Gibson and Alistair MacDonald

INTRODUCTION

Most jurisdictions have some form of state-mandated Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process for proposed large or complex projects, which may or may not include requirement for Social Impact Assessment (SIA). In this chapter, we shall use the term Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) when referring to all forms of state-mandated impact assessment. ESIA, as a pre-development planning process, is designed to determine whether the proposed development should be allowed to proceed and, if so, under what conditions. In most jurisdictions, an ESIA agency works directly for or is an adjunct party to the state. It will make either a final decision or a recommendation to a state actor who will make the final decision about whether or not the development should proceed. Although the physical and biophysical environment is generally the primary or even sole focus of an ESIA, there has been increasing attention to ensuring the avoidance of detrimental changes to the social, economic, cultural, and health environments of people who may be affected by a proposed development. In addition, there has been an increased focus on issues such as sustainability, distributional equity, and the maximisation of benefits to the people who live closest to and are most adversely affected by a proposed development (O’Faircheallaigh, 2013; Horowitz et al., 2018; see Chapter 27). This focus on the human environment is now expected in some form in most jurisdictions. However, substantial gaps remain in the management of social impacts and benefits in many ESIA systems (see Chapter 2). This is partly due to the trend that the primary focus of ESIA is avoidance of adverse effects rather than maximisation of beneficial outcomes, especially for marginalised sub-populations (Dylan et al., 2013; Horowitz et al., 2018).

Impact and Benefit Agreements (IBAs) are contractual arrangements made between Indigenous governments and companies associated with proposed, and sometimes ongoing, projects. Similar types of agreements are also negotiated in non-Indigenous communities, called ‘Community Development Agreements’ or ‘Community Benefit Agreements’, largely stemming from African experiences (ICMM, 2012) and, more recently, from the United States (DOE, 2017). Although the various forms of agreements differ in their origins and impetus, the term IBA will be used for all agreements in this chapter, although the focus of this chapter is on ESIA and the connection to Indigenous communities. There are many introductions to IBAs for those who would like to learn more about the negotiation and implementation processes (e.g. Gibson & O’Faircheallaigh, 2015; O’Faircheallaigh, 2016; Odumosu-Ayanu & Newman, 2021).

IBAs are expected as part of a proponent’s social licence to operate (Vanclay & Hanna, 2019) and are legally required in some jurisdictions (e.g., Nunavut, Canada). In most cases, the

impacted groups are Indigenous peoples who have Indigenous rights that require special protection and promotion, while also being among the people who are most likely to suffer from the adverse effects associated with changes to the land (Hanna & Vanclay, 2013). In many places, Indigenous peoples suffer from systemic problems that lead to distinct disadvantages in their ability to benefit from proposed projects, including a pronounced lack of access to education and training, persistent poverty, and other negative socio-economic conditions (Gibson & O’Faircheallaigh, 2015). Although IBAs are mostly not mandatory and often uncertain in outcome, they tend to play a primary role in bringing benefits into communities and addressing project impacts (O’Faircheallaigh, 2021). IBAs have proven to be a valuable means in promoting access to benefits for Indigenous peoples through measures related to employment, business procurement, education and training, community development, and direct financial payments (Gibson & O’Faircheallaigh, 2015; O’Faircheallaigh, 2021).

Quite often, a proposed development has a formal state ESIA process ongoing while IBA negotiations are underway. This chapter discusses the issues that arise when parallel planning processes for an ESIA and negotiations for one (or more) IBAs occur, as well how these processes can, do, and should intersect. Our primary focus is on the broad spectrum of social considerations rather than the biophysical issues, although for Indigenous peoples this distinction is meaningless as they are usually deeply intertwined (Gibson & Klinck, 2005). We provide examples from our experiences with ESIA and IBAs, and we identify issues that emerge that can hamper the success of ESIA and IBAs. We note that ensuring there are appropriate intersections between the teams working on the ESIA and IBA tracks is critical to good project planning, process efficiency and effectiveness, and positive outcomes in the form of reduced adverse effects from projects and increased access by communities to the benefits from projects.

WHAT ARE IMPACT AND BENEFIT AGREEMENTS?

An IBA is a structured contract between a project proponent and Indigenous peoples that strives to articulate the benefits of the project and the controls over any impacts. They typically outline a structured approach to managing the relationship between the parties during the years the project is being planned, executed, and right through to the time when the project is finished and the land is being restored (Cascadden et al., 2021). Negotiation of these contracts first began in the 1980s and 1990s in Canada and Australia, the two countries where they are most prevalent (O’Faircheallaigh, 2021). They are also negotiated in many jurisdictions where there is no formal requirement that they be in place for a proposed project to proceed. This suggests that the driver for having an agreement is not a legal or policy requirement. Rather, it is the social context, sometimes with political risk to the proponent, and the complexities of the proposed project that create the conditions for the parties to negotiate (McCreary et al., 2016). A key driver for IBA implementation has been the pressure exerted by Indigenous peoples themselves. In Canada, a series of court cases have caused the government and companies to become aware of the need to understand and include the rights, interests, and responsibilities that Indigenous peoples hold towards the land where major projects operate (or seek to operate). In some instances, a key driver of change has been industry’s increased recognition that relying on the ESIA process alone to gain a social licence to operate is a financially and strategically risky proposition.

A relatively recent driver for IBAs has been the requirement for the free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) of Indigenous peoples for proposed projects in their traditional territories, as is enshrined in international law through the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Hanna & Vanclay, 2013; BCFNEMC, 2022). Consent, as offered in major development projects, comprises: ‘the right to say “yes”, the right to say “no” and the right to say “yes, with conditions”’ (Joffe, 2020, p. 2). In 2013, the International Council for Metals and Minerals (ICMM) recommended to their membership that FPIC be sought in newly proposed major mining projects that will impact Indigenous lands (ICMM, 2015), leaving already existing projects stranded without an FPIC requirement. For proponents, garnering the required social licence to operate from one or more Indigenous groups may be a surer path to getting a development to proceed rather than relying on the state to garner consent from Indigenous peoples. This makes negotiation of an IBA an attractive and increasingly essential option (Keeling & Sandlos, 2015; Loutit et al., 2016; Papillon & Rodon, 2017). Industry organisations have conducted sector reviews and settled on recommending that FPIC, which is linked to IBAs in important ways, should be sought, and then engaged through IBAs (ICMM, 2013). The drivers for Indigenous peoples to engage in IBA negotiation are varied. In many jurisdictions, Indigenous groups tend to feel that they cannot rely on governmental institutions to maximise economic and community development benefits from industry projects (Le Meur et al., 2013). Indeed, many Indigenous groups consider IBA negotiations as part of their development or recovery of governance and stewardship of their traditional lands and resources – rights that may or may not be adequately protected by state or sub-state governments (Peterson St-Laurent & Le Billon, 2015; Craik et al., 2017).

Many historical precedents have led to the rise of IBAs. The 1995 Raglan Agreement was the first major public IBA to be negotiated in Canada, and it continues to be referenced (Raglan, 1995). The Raglan Agreement covers the major topics normally identified in IBAs and is the soft leverage that Indigenous peoples across Canada constantly use as a reference guide and to pressure companies that are not as eager to negotiate.

Northern jurisdictions in Canada have required IBAs in modern land claim agreements, such as the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (1993) and the Tłı̨ch̨ Land Claim Agreement (Tłı̨ch̨ Agreement, 2003). The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement requires that any major project (i.e., lasting more than five years, creating more than 200 person years of employment, or capital costs greater than \$35 million using 1986 constant dollars) must have an Inuit Impact Benefit Agreement. The federal government has very rarely stepped in to provide direction or expectations. However, in one federal environmental review of a major diamond mine, the federal Minister required the proponent and the Indigenous governments to negotiate IBAs, giving them both a 60 day pause in the federal process to negotiate jointly (Sosa & Keenan, 2001). This soft policy requirement led to the IBAs that continue to be implemented between the proponent and the Indigenous governments in the region. Years later in this same jurisdiction, the Northwest Territories and Indigenous governments now require IBAs to be negotiated for major mining projects through the Mineral Resource Act of 2019 (Northwest Territories, 2019).

In addition to project-specific company and Indigenous-based agreements, there are also government-to-government agreements that ensure tax sharing is occurring. These are emerging in British Columbia and Ontario, especially with agreements guaranteeing that resource revenue from industrial projects is shared to facilitate socio-economic development and improved economic and planning climates in Indigenous communities (Kung et al., 2022).

Fair and equitable participation in resource development and the sharing of benefits produced by the industry contributes to reconciliation efforts and honours the relationships between the Crown and Indigenous peoples. Benefit-sharing agreements can be completed with individual communities or approached regionally (Wright & White, 2012).

IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND AGREEMENT-MAKING PROCESSES

Given that ESIA and IBA processes have the potential to complement each other, it is desirable to outline the characteristics of these processes to understand their comparative strengths and limitations. Table 34.1 identifies the key characteristics associated with ESIA and IBA processes and outcomes. We observed that there is a marked lack of transparency in IBAs. ESIA is an open and public process that all stakeholders can observe, whereas the IBA is generally a bilateral confidential engagement between the parties to the agreement. This has consequences. For example, regarding the social impacts of employment, a public commitment in an ESIA process to Indigenous hire by a major project can be tracked through publicly available data. Failure to achieve targets could then be examined in public forums. A private commitment to the same matter in an IBA can only be tracked between the parties, leaving examination of any failures to be managed by the parties themselves.

A similarity is that in both processes communities rely heavily on the provision of funding by government and/or proponents to cover their costs of engagement. This can put the communities at a substantial disadvantage and power imbalance, since the level of effort that can be put into critical research, due diligence, data gathering, analysis of likely changes, and meetings with other parties (e.g. the assessment body, proponent, consultants, and politicians) is linked to the available resources. Many communities have noted that there can be long lead times in accessing adequate funds to participate fully in ESIA and IBA processes. This can lead to communities waiting for funding to be allocated throughout these processes or being forced to make difficult decisions within unduly hasty timelines (Tennberg, 2002).

ESIA is a problem identification and assessment process with a narrow range of solutions, which are constrained by and enabled in legislation and regulatory processes. Assessment bodies may be very reluctant to assess impacts or benefits outside the established framework and may be reluctant to commit the state to imposing measures on the proponent or the state for issues outside of this jurisdictional box. While the ESIA process may reveal many potential impacts, which may or may not be addressed properly, IBAs tend to open a space for discussions about how to manage some of the more difficult impacts that communities can face, for example health issues (Jones & Bradshaw, 2015). Thus, IBAs have more latitude to find solutions to problems than do ESIA. However, what ESIA lacks in terms of implementation latitude, it makes up for in the weight of its requirements, although this is tempered by the lack of ESIA follow-up.

Like ESIA, the IBA negotiation process starts with the assumption that negative social and environmental impacts will occur and that benefits must be provided. In the IBA process, parties focus on negotiating a wide range of solutions. These are typically in the form of mitigation, monitoring, and benefit-sharing measures. Thus, the IBA negotiation process can be seen as a 'gap filler' following on from the ESIA process and as a targeted problem-solving process with a wider range of solutions applied to a small number of key issues.

Table 34.1 Contrasting the key elements of impact assessments and impact and benefit agreements

Characteristic	Environmental & social impact assessments	Impact & benefit agreements
Responsible parties	State government, proponent of development, Indigenous peoples.	Indigenous groups and proponent of development.
Legal mechanism	Legal permits and licences, derived from legislation.	Bilateral legal contract.
Timeline for review process	Varies, generally from 1 to 3 years, with specific timeframes often set in the regulatory procedure, and conditions set for the life of the project.	Varies, generally from a few months to several years, depending on how long it takes for negotiation to reach agreement. The desired terms of the agreement might be presented early in the process. Agreements may be subject to periodic review.
Scope	Project specific, with a focus on avoidance of adverse effects on the environment and people. Sometimes consideration of benefits but this is largely peripheral. Benefits often focused at a wider regional or national scale.	Project specific with focus on stewardship and environmental responsibilities, employment and training, business opportunities, financial benefits, and implementation structures. They are inherently local in focus.
Implementation	Through compliance and enforcement of licence conditions. ESIA follow-up is not generally a strong focus of the regulatory procedures, so the adequacy of compliance depends on the goodwill of the proponent and/or the extent of oversight by a variety of parties.	Most agreements contain an approach to ensuring that the commitments are pursued. The extent of enforcement depends on capacity, funding, and commitment of the parties.
Lifetime	Conditions generally apply for the life of project. However, ESIA follow-up and compliance monitoring is not strong, especially for social issues.	Life of project and potentially after closure with some agreements specifying ongoing responsibilities after closure.
Review of implementation	Rarely conducted or required.	Likely to have an implementation review process and clauses to allow reconsideration of the terms of the agreement to permit adjustments.
Reopening of instrument	If there is a material change in the nature of the project, there may be a new ESIA for the new component parts.	Material change reassessment clauses may be built into agreement, or there may be clauses requiring review on a timed basis, or if expectations not met.
Typical conditions	Conditions typically limited to environmental mitigation and monitoring requirements. Occasionally, socio-economic, cultural, or health protection measures may be required of proponent or agents of the state.	In addition to monitoring and mitigation measures, there are always requirements around economic and community development, with a focus on employment and procurement. Often there will be benefit-sharing arrangements involving financial transfers to the affected community.
Transparency of process and information	All evidence, decisions, conditions, and sometimes reasons for decision are usually available on a publicly accessible record. Sometimes, provisions allow for Indigenous traditional knowledge to be kept confidential.	Varies by jurisdiction. Typically, a public statement containing general points is made, but details, especially about financial arrangements are kept confidential. In a few jurisdictions, IBAs are required to be public.
Funding for community engagement	Varies by jurisdiction. However, while most governments provide (or require the project to provide) avenues for community engagement, there usually is not direct support to communities for their involvement, preparation, or independent advice.	Usually, proponents will be required to pay for all costs of engagement, including for the local community to be prepared, and for independent legal and technical advice.

Characteristic	Environmental & social impact assessments	Impact & benefit agreements
Timing of the processes	Often ongoing in parallel to IBA negotiations.	Often ongoing in parallel to ESIA processes, although ESIA processes usually start before IBA negotiations commence.
Potential to influence the other process	Local knowledge and especially Indigenous traditional knowledge that might be identified in the IBA process should be used to inform the ESIA.	The information from the formal ESIA process could (and should) be considered in the IBA process.
Role in development approval	The ESIA is a mandatory requirement of the state in advance of any approval decision being made. Where an ESIA is conducted as an independent activity (at arm's length from the proponent), the ESIA might make strong statements about whether the project should be approved or not.	IBAs are usually voluntary (although increasingly standard), although some jurisdictions do require IBAs. Completion of an IBA is likely to influence an approval decision. However, depending on the context, an approval decision might still be granted even if an IBA was not yet concluded.

The scale of focus for each process also differs. While ESIA requires a review of local, regional, and national benefits, IBAs predominantly focus on local issues, with some regional issues potentially considered. When the Prince Rupert Gas Transmission Pipeline project was proposed in British Columbia, the ESIA process focused on a review of traffic pressures on transportation corridors, increased demand for health services, and social pressures at the regional level. When it came time for Lake Babine First Nation to consider the impacts and track them in an IBA, they focused on the precise location of the construction camp, the management of sexual harassment and conflict, and funding for staff from their nation to manage the issues that would arise from the camp (Gibson et al., 2017).

Despite their differing focus, there is common ground. For example, both ESIA and IBA have joint interests in understanding the number of jobs, the labour force characteristics, and the potential availability of labour. Where they differ tends to be in the commitments made. While ESIA can help describe the labour force reality, it is more commonly through an IBA that parties can require the setting of targets for employment at a project site. Conversely, the ESIA process may lack the jurisdiction or political will to impose complementary measures by the state or require the proponent to set such targets.

Some issues are tracked through the IBA monitoring process, perhaps the most salient of which are the financial revenues of the project and the payment of entitlements to Indigenous peoples. In ESIA, there generally is implicit acceptance that the profitability of the project is the business of the proponent alone, except where reviewers may consider the financial capacity of the project to ensure there is sufficient funding to cover all costs of remediation and reclamation. Conversely, in IBAs, often there will be a detailed review of the financial revenues, costs, and implications of the project. The parties will negotiate a financial arrangement that ensures benefit-sharing, either through profit-sharing, equity investment, or other mechanism (Gibson & O'Faircheallaigh, 2012; see Chapter 27).

Gender and intersectionality have recently become a central topic for consideration in SIA (see Chapter 16). The formal assessment body may also direct the proponent to review the potential impacts of the project on vulnerable populations. This may be achieved through engagement of diverse Indigenous peoples within ESIA, given the distinct and complex understandings of gender, and gender roles and responsibilities within Indigenous cultures. For example, women may hold distinct responsibilities for cultural transmission and resource protection. Therefore, the potential impact from development may have a different or increased impact on women. Another area of impact may be the potential for harassment or

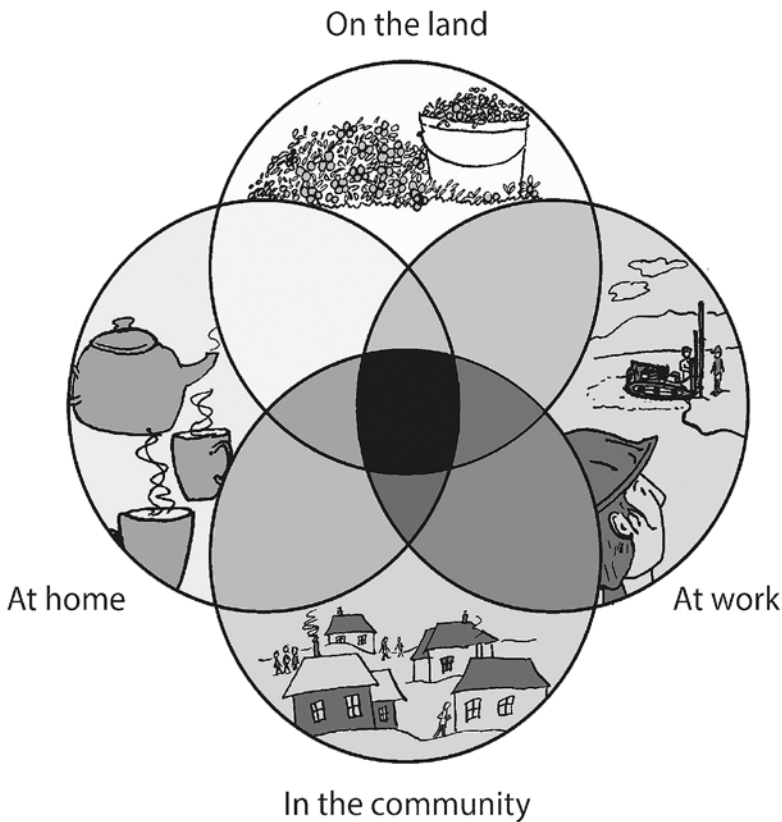
assault at work camps or at the project site, or increased pressure for sexual services in the region where a construction camp is situated (Gibson et al., 2017). Within the system of ESIA, while these realities may be described, there is remarkably little that is done to mitigate these impacts. Where these types of impacts are identified, they can be addressed through innovative measures in the IBA.

Non-traditional impact assessment processes can highlight issues of highest relevance to a community. Indigenous-led impact assessments, where communities can take control of the assessment process, allow them to prioritise their values, worldview, and language (Bullock et al., 2019). The results of an ESIA done in this way can transform the framework for consent to a model whereby the project is understood and considered as a whole, rather than being broken down species-by-species, topic-by-topic, as tends to be done in standard ESIAs (Morales, 2019). Having gained a thorough understanding of the impacts from the Indigenous perspective, Indigenous peoples can then leverage those results into stronger IBA conditions that reflect their concerns. These processes can be conducted in parallel to state government processes (Bruce & Hume, 2015; Gibson et al., 2018; O’Faircheallaigh & MacDonald, 2022).

A FRAMEWORK FOR CONSIDERING ESIA AND IBA

ESIA and IBA address how negative impacts and benefits might occur and affect Indigenous peoples. Here, we focus on the domains Indigenous peoples tend to use in scoping, understanding, and managing impacts from major projects: in the family; in the community; in the workplace; and on the land (see Figure 34.1). This framework is based on our more than 20 years of experience working in community across Canada. Smyth and Vanclay (2017) identified criteria that need to be in place for social frameworks to support effective management, namely that they must: build on other models; address human rights; be compatible with international standards; address social goals; and be participatory and practical. Figure 34.1 addresses these issues, largely because the domains are the scales in which communities tend to identify and experience issues. By focusing on these domains, practical planning processes that are inclusive of community and can be more effectively run. Table 34.2 identifies the matters that ESIA and IBA tend to consider under the domains in Figure 34.1.

Reflecting on the comments in Table 34.2, it would appear that the state is more comfortable protecting wildlife rather than protecting people from the effects of development. The state also tends to focus on a larger scale, such as at the regional or national population, rather than on the specific local dynamics of an Indigenous community. IBAs require specific and focused actions, actors, and accountabilities. They focus on the specific population, land, and Indigenous peoples, while directing benefits into those people who are closest to and most likely to be adversely affected by a project (Le Meur et al., 2013). ESIA does not focus much on impacts in the workplace, in the community, or at the homes of impacted peoples, whereas IBAs place much more emphasis on these domains. IBA negotiations can fill important gaps in understanding and overcoming adverse effects that are not fully examined in the ESIA process. IBAs also provide the potential for a deep dive into key issues that may be treated at a less granular level in ESIA processes.



Source: Graphic by Rachel Ford, Firelight Group, used with permission.

Figure 34.1 *Focal domains for social impact assessment and impact and benefit agreement making processes*

DIFFERENT SCENARIOS IN THE SEQUENCING OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND IMPACT AND BENEFIT AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS

Here, we consider five possible scenarios in the relationship between the negotiation of IBAs and the formal ESIA process. The timing of these processes can greatly affect staffing and team management, the issues identified in the processes, the resourcing available, the leverage the Indigenous party might have, and outcomes that are achieved.

Scenario 1: ESIA Completed First, Followed by an IBA

In many cases, IBA negotiations are finalised or even only commenced after the ESIA is completed, and are usually heavily informed by the findings of the ESIA. What such a sequence provides (with its strong information base about impacts) must be considered alongside the fact that, for Indigenous peoples, the point of maximum leverage towards completing a con-

Table 34.2 Comparing the domains in impact assessment and impact and benefit agreements

Domain	Environmental & social impact assessment	Impact & benefit agreements
On the land	While the natural environment is the primary focus in most ESIA, the impacts to people on the land is often a secondary focus in ESIA. ESIA generally cover impacts on water, animals, vegetation, and air. ESIA recommend monitoring and reporting requirements, and adaptive management. Over time, ESIA has included more detailed examination of Indigenous land and resource use, and cultural connections to land. In ESIA, the increasing recognition that, for Indigenous peoples, land is lived in, rather than something 'other' or external, is an important change in thinking that has led to protecting food security, food sovereignty, wellbeing, and ways of life. There is also greater consideration of the trade-offs between the economic value created by invasive industries versus the value of protecting the traditional subsistence economies of Indigenous peoples.	Issues associated with being on the land are generally an important aspect in most IBAs. Measures stipulated in IBAs generally include community-based monitoring and ongoing community engagement. Care will be taken to design the project in ways that preserve traditional cultural practices, such as hunting and fishing. Where this is not possible, compensation will be paid and/or alternative arrangements may be negotiated. IBAs may cover funding for cultural programmes on the land, impact funding, provisions for times when traditional foods are not available, and other adaptations associated with impacts on traditional use and foods.
At work	The social impacts of work camps or project workforce culture are generally a peripheral focus in most ESIA. Each regulated site may establish mechanisms to understand and account for the specific needs of Indigenous women, gender diverse, and two spirit (see Chapter 16) and LGBTQ+ folks within their sites. ESIA may review the nature of the work rotation and may identify measures that are not covered by any particular legislation.	Work issues are a primary focus in most IBAs. Measures might relate to: provision of Indigenous foods in the canteen; setting aside 'cultural spaces' on site; preferential hiring for Indigenous peoples; training and education funds to increase Indigenous recruitment; Indigenous liaison positions; preferential procurement measures; and cross-cultural training requirements for all staff and contractors.
In the community	Community is a primary focus in most ESIA. ESIA often identify issues but generally very little is done to address them, e.g., crime and policing, pressures on social services, access to adequate housing.	Community is a key focus in most IBAs, and the identification of measures often includes funding for community development and infrastructure, apprenticeship and training opportunities, and employment readiness programmes.
At home	Home is a peripheral focus in most ESIA. Some ESIA may consider Indigenous determinants of health and wellbeing at the local and regional level, including food security, which is felt at the household level, but this is rarely a primary focus.	Home is a secondary focus in most IBAs; however, measures such as financial planning, childcare support, mental and physical health support for families especially stay-at-home partners, and food security support tied to the 'on the land' domain are often identified.

sequential IBA is often prior to the state making the required legal decision on whether the development should proceed, and if so under what conditions.

When IBAs emerge after an ESIA, the team focused on ESIA can have this as their single focus, and then the IBA team can review key impacts and include them in the IBA. The team will comb through the ESIA topics and then design mitigations to address the impact. Funding from the proponent can be allocated towards the impact management. Regarding scale, the ESIA is likely to have focused on the broader region, while the IBA review generally drills into specifics to ensure that there are local benefits. Where there is a requirement for an IBA,

local communities will hold leverage because the proponent will want to ensure that there is a completed agreement before the final government decision about the project.

Scenario 2: IBA Completed First, Prior to the ESIA Being Conducted

There can be benefits from completing an IBA prior to the ESIA being conducted. They include benefits to the proponent of having secured some form of consent for the project prior to facing decisions by the state, and benefits to the Indigenous group of both guaranteed benefits and impact reduction mechanisms rather than relying on the, often tenuous, prospect of the state-led ESIA process securing such mechanisms. The amount of time and effort the Indigenous group is required to invest in the ESIA process can be reduced through early IBA completion, and the sequencing of staff time can be helpful, so there is reduced risk of burnout.

There are also risks associated with completing an IBA first. The ESIA process is often useful in defining the full scope of likely adverse effects on people and the environment. This information can be used to fully define the scope of offsetting benefits required in an IBA. If the IBA is completed prior to fully understanding these risks, there is potential that the negotiated benefits will not be commensurate with the risks. The scale of information may also be limited given that, without a completed ESIA, there may be very little information on the local or regional benefits, leaving parties to negotiate with limited information. Funding for review of the impacts after the ESIA is complete may also be limited. Lastly, the proponent may strongly desire and pressure the Indigenous government for an agreement before the ESIA.

Scenario 3: ESIA and IBA Undertaken in Tandem

The most common situation in recent years has been for parallel ESIA and IBA negotiation processes. In some jurisdictions, ministerial decisions on projects have only been made once there is substantial progress or completion of IBAs. In instances where the processes are simultaneous, the parties have the ability to properly understand all impacts and benefits, and can use this understanding to push for improvements or key outcomes in the IBA. There is also an opportunity to carefully study the impacts and benefits, and drill into the often-limited true benefits being offered to the affected Indigenous peoples. When this is identified by the Indigenous party, it can be used as leverage to bring the state and the proponent to the table to focus on true benefit-sharing and social and environmental protection.

The benefits of an ESIA and IBA being developed in tandem include the possibility that resources and budget can be allocated by the government and the proponent. This sharing is likely to lead to extra resources being made available than would have been the case otherwise. With practitioners working on the ESIA and IBA at the same time, the local scale can be better considered, with specific studies done to query site-specific concerns. Critical issues in the ESIA that the Indigenous peoples seek to control or manage can also be settled in the IBA. The processes can be linked, and information shared in real time between the teams to increase understanding and explore how mitigation can be best achieved.

The risks of the ESIA and IBA occurring in tandem include challenges related to team coordination. For example, as both teams will be busy, and there may need to be significant crossover of teams so that there is information sharing. Both teams will be working hard to get a tremendous amount of work undertaken, often in a relatively short amount of time.

Scenario 4: An Existing IBA is Renegotiated to Incorporate a New Proposed Project or Project Expansion

This situation often occurs with long-term projects when new operations are being planned, either a major expansion or potentially an additional project. In such situations, both the ESIA and the IBA usually need to be updated, requiring new project teams to be implemented. Coordination is likely to allow a sharper and shorter effort for this process. However, the ESIA tends to be focused only on the effects of the new or expanded project and the labour force ability to meet this new time horizon, and any critical issues this triggers, rather than completing a new full ESIA and IBA. In contrast, the local Indigenous group is likely to want to have a review of the operation of the existing IBA before they are willing to discuss any new development, and make seek for any legacy issues to be addressed first.

Scenario 5: IBA with no ESIA

In Canada, projects that have been operating for some time may have been approved without a formal ESIA process. This leaves Indigenous peoples in the position of preparing an IBA without a public review. Sometimes these projects might have been below the threshold requiring them to have an ESIA, and sometimes they were developed before there was legislation requiring ESIA. Nevertheless, many of these projects are now seeking to have IBAs with their host communities, due to public pressure for this. In these cases, there is often a lack of public information about the environmental impacts of the project. Environmental impacts may not be well understood, and there may be very little in the way of public reporting on the project. The company may be less motivated to fund environmental technical reviews. There is often little engagement with the government, and no planning process to support the collection or provision of information. With no formal ESIA available, the parties will need to ensure that there is resourcing made available for an internal ESIA.

Consequences Arising from these Scenarios

Where it is possible to have influence, the timing of negotiations is a critical issue to consider. In some cases, IBA negotiations are concluded prematurely, before the full impacts of a proposed development are properly understood (as identified in an ESIA). This can mean that the community may have inadequate protection measures and benefits specified in the IBA should the project proceed. Indigenous peoples may miss out on benefits or protection from impacts when they do not carefully review the project. Conversely, in some cases, IBA negotiations may not commence early enough, running the risk that, after an approval decision is made, the proponent may lack incentive to engage in negotiations or complete a substantive IBA (Tennberg, 2002; Loutit et al., 2016).

If there is no connection between the ESIA and IBA teams, both may focus on analysis and solutions that are, at best, not supportive of each other, or, at worst, contradictory. If the IBA team is not connected to the ESIA team, then IBAs may end up negotiating for measures that look good on paper but may not maximise benefits or avoid or mitigate any adverse effects that are likely to occur from the proposed development. For example, if parties agree that the workforce should have a target set for Indigenous employment, without knowing in advance whether there is an adequate Indigenous labour pool available and interested in working at the

project, what value would that have? Frequent meetings, check-ins, and sharing of information and strategy is vital to ensure team coordination.

IBAs generally stipulate that there be funding for long-term management and for engagement with the proponent. ESIA rarely does this, and when there is post-ESIA funding, it is generally focused on monitoring the project through committees. Some jurisdictions do require public funding of ESIA follow-up and monitoring programmes. However, while this is happening with regard to environmental issues, it is rare that public funds are required for social monitoring. Tracking and adapting to change is difficult without resourcing and the committed focus of those responsible for the issues.

One overlooked aspect of funding that IBAs cannot address is the phase after an ESIA is complete, and particularly the commitment of funds by government agencies to implement measures. These public funds can be vital to the effective management of issues. For example, when a public road was constructed to a community in the northern Arctic, a requirement of the ESIA report was for public financing for Indigenous-led monitoring. This, together with a requirement for annual reporting on the funding and monitoring, have been vital to ensure that the government annually commits the resources needed to monitor the caribou habitat. Social impacts also need to be monitored and reported on. The parties worked together to develop adaptive management in the event that negative trends were experienced. Public resourcing of the management of social and environmental issues can be hard to mobilise. However, when the measures noted in an ESIA report are carefully worded, funding becomes a requirement that can be mobilised by the parties to the review process. As noted, governments are not normally a party to an IBA, which means that developing requirements for tracking and funding monitoring also has to occur in the public process (outside the IBA). On social issues, requiring public funding to be mobilised around social trends can be very difficult. For example, when the road noted above was built, changes in social outcomes were identified in the first year, with a significant increase in crime being reported. With no mechanism in place to provide responsive and adaptive management, the Indigenous government chose to implement their own community safety plans to address the issues.

CONCLUSION

In the development of projects, Environmental and Social Impact Assessment and Impact and Benefit Agreement processes are essential tools. Where possible, the ESIA process and IBA negotiations should occur in parallel tracks over a similar timeframe so that they can inform each other. To be successful, they both require public resourcing, ample time for review and consideration, and allocation of staff. The early identification of the topics to be meaningfully dealt with by each process and how effective coordination can occur is desirable for good outcomes.

IBA negotiations are flexible, tend to identify local issues, and generally cover many key topics that are inadequately considered in ESIA. In contrast, the ESIA process is generally a point-in-time review process that enables the development of baseline data on key variables, such as the labour force, health, and social services. Overall, ESIA is a good diagnostic tool, but is generally poor at managing the specific impacts that occur, especially at the local level. While IBA negotiations are not designed to diagnose all the impacts and benefits that may occur from a project, they can be an effective means to deal with impacts and to maximise

benefits through flexible bilateral conditions. Each process has its own key role to play in the process of developing and implementing sustainable projects that contribute to better outcomes. Teams are encouraged to identify their individual strengths and limitations, and build appropriate linkages. ESIA and IBA processes can work in tandem. ESIA is a public process that can be used to motivate strong monitoring and evaluation, as well as enable the public resourcing for necessary actions. An IBA, which is only sometimes required by legislation, can work in tandem with the ESIA to address the gaps in the system.

Where possible, the technical and process management teams of the ESIA should be closely connected to the IBA negotiation teams, and vice versa. It may even be advisable to have some of the same people on both teams. Where this is not possible for whatever reason, regular meetings between the teams are vital. The findings of the ESIA can increase knowledge of the impacts that need to be mitigated through IBA clauses and provide the leverage necessary to get those measures adopted.

Despite their benefits, the ESIA and IBA processes are demanding in terms of the time and energy of staff, leadership, and community members. These processes often occur over several years. This can distract from other pressing issues, such as governance or community-based concerns. These social processes are themselves a social impact, taking years of person effort away from other potential tasks or family and community time. At times, social conflict can erupt in communities over the allocation of resources and funding.

IBA negotiators need to be aware that benefits for one person may not be benefits for another. A rising tide of employment, wage earning, business opportunities, and travel options for some community members may put pressures on the social and economic conditions for others who do not have the same opportunities. For example, while young men may see strong opportunities from a negotiated agreement, young women, elders, and those living on the socio-economic margins of a community may see higher costs of living, housing pressures, and changes to their social status that are inherently negative. Questions of distributional equity and protecting the most vulnerable in a community from boom effects should be top-of-mind for ESIA practitioners and IBA negotiators. This is especially the case where large sums of money, large numbers of jobs, and large business procurement opportunities are being built into an agreement.

The more communal the process of finalising the terms of an IBA, the better. This can create additional layers of decision-making and influence the balance between completing an agreement quickly, versus completing an agreement that is fully supported by the community, and where all the pros and cons have been weighed-up by as many impacted persons as possible. Each Indigenous group will have its own governance approach, laws, and decision-making process to follow throughout the ESIA and IBA deliberations. Respecting these ways may take time, but is essential for effective communication, building trust and transparency, and enhancing the outcomes from the agreement.

The ESIA and IBA processes can work together, and the following recommendations are intended to allow negotiators and reviewers to maximise the benefits and avoid the impacts from projects.

1. Connect the IBA negotiations team to the ESIA team to enable exchange of information wherever possible.
2. Ensure that international standards, such as FPIC, are addressed and observed in ESIA and IBAs. Note that FPIC is a standard that needs to be renewed and maintained over time.

3. Consider each domain of impact at home, on the land, in the community, and at work explicitly, as well as how each might impact on vulnerable populations.
4. Carefully consider the sequencing of the ESIA and IBA processes to allow reliable information from the ESIA to inform the IBA, and the ability to implement strong measures and appropriate benefits in the IBA.
5. Carefully review the impacts identified in the ESIA and IBA in order to design specific measures to address those impacts, especially the highly significant impacts. Ensure that the public government is accountable for social and environmental monitoring and follow-up programmes.
6. Prior to making any decisions, fully understand the impacts likely to occur from the project itself, and that are likely to arise from the agreement-making process.
7. IBA conditions should be: linked to the key issues likely to affect the impacts and benefits deriving from the project; focused on increasing the ability of the community to maximise benefits from the project; and focused on issues that are local and not already adequately dealt with by existing corporate policies and government regulations. There is no point in spending valuable time and effort on issues that are unlikely to matter, where people do not want to engage in the project, where local people will be unlikely to be able to gain meaningful advantage from the project, or where the issue is largely dealt with through other existing mechanisms.

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35. Community visioning

Munyaradzi Chitakira

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the concept and practice of community visioning (CV) and its place in Social Impact Assessment (SIA), particularly when done as part of the social investment projects associated with large footprint activities, such as mines or dams. The chapter outlines CV and explores various issues in CV processes, including power/influence dynamics. It highlights practical approaches that can be adopted when engaging local communities and other stakeholders in visioning processes. Social investment projects are activities normally intended to improve the wellbeing of project-affected people by addressing their priority needs and challenges (Esteves & Vanclay, 2009). These projects are usually initiated or facilitated by external stakeholders, which may be government agencies or private organisations. Usually this is done as part of the social investment strategy or benefit-sharing arrangements for a large-scale project (see Chapter 27), typically recommended as a result of an SIA process. SIA is regarded as being ‘the processes of analysing, monitoring and managing the intended and unintended social consequences, both positive and negative, of planned interventions (policies, programmes, plans, projects) and any social change processes invoked by those interventions’ (Vanclay et al., 2015, p. 1). This chapter emphasises that CV has been and will continue to be an indispensable tool for SIA.

THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY VISIONING

By actively involving local community members in planning the development of their area, CV is a useful technique for ensuring better and more acceptable outcomes from large-scale projects and associated social investment projects. Green et al. (2000, pp. 1–2) defined CV as ‘a process by which a community envisions the future it wants and plans how to achieve it.’ Most writers (McCann, 2001; Cuthill, 2004; French & Gagne, 2010; Vanclay et al., 2015; Gibson & Clanahan, 2021) have viewed CV as being a collaborative and inclusive community planning process intended to establish goals for the future of a community. This general understanding emphasises two key elements of CV, collaboration and inclusivity. In other words, CV is a process whereby a broad cross-section of community members come together to visualise, discuss and arrive at common ideas about their preferred future community, and to plan how to achieve that future. In the CV process, community members jointly identify their current and preferred collective identity, purpose and values, and develop a shared vision of their future. Visioning builds local collective capacity and competencies, and promotes ownership in the outcome of the process and often in the project that might have triggered the process. It creates a platform for local community members to collaborate with other stakeholders and develop common priorities and actions (Sanginga & Chitsike, 2005; Chitakira et al., 2012a, 2012b).

The use of CV likely began in the 1980s and flourished in the 1990s (Shipley & Newkirk, 1998), and now there are many examples of CV being used across the world. For example, CV was employed in the 1980s for planning the Chattanooga Tennessee City region (USA) to address air quality and enhance the city's sustainability (Chitakira et al., 2012b). It was used in the 1990s to develop a plan for the Atlanta metropolitan region, which was heralded as being the largest community-based long-range planning effort ever conducted in the USA at the time (Helling, 1998). In Australia, the *Maroochy 2025 Community Visioning Project* in the South East Queensland Region is regarded as a good example of developing community plans about the future (Gould, 2005). Resources to assist in CV are also being developed. For example, an *Activities Toolkit* about the application of visioning to disaster risk reduction was recently developed by the Tomorrow's Cities Disaster Risk Hub (Hope et al., 2022). The toolkit is intended for use by stakeholders from cities that have not implemented future visioning relating to disaster risk reduction. Places that have implemented future visioning may find the toolkit useful for critical learning, as well as for monitoring and evaluating their practices.

An example of the use of CV in Latin America is the *Indicators of Juruti* project (FGV, 2009). This was around long-term local development options for Juruti, a municipality located on the Amazon River in the western part of the state of Para in Brazil. It was undertaken by the Getulio Vargas Foundation (FGV) in cooperation with local communities. The process was conducted over two years, involving over 500 representatives of various local and regional institutions. The FGV started by identifying the primary institutions in Juruti and their representatives, the main persons in the public sector, as well as community leaders. The project was intended to direct sustainable development in the municipality through the setting of goals and the development of appropriate monitoring indicators. The indicators were developed through public consultative workshops and meetings held in the Juruti, Santarém and Belém areas in Para, Brazil. Over 140 people attended these gatherings. During these workshops, the participants were asked to reflect on what development means and what indicators could be used to monitor (or keep track of) the development-induced changes taking place. Participants were also asked to give their views about whether to monitor the development in Juruti alone or to include the potential changes anticipated in the wider region. Through the workshops, a range of indicators was developed. The indicators were presented to the public for comment and critique. Various platforms and media (including a booklet, mini workshops in the rural communities, and a website to gather suggestions online) were employed to encourage people to participate. The participants identified the priority issues, that is, the most pressing issues that should be monitored. The issues identified included security, conflict, education, health, water, energy, flora, fish and fishing, transport, communication, agriculture, and the local economy in general. The next step was to gather information on how and where to obtain data, and the appropriate measurement approaches or metrics. All this was achieved through effective and meaningful consultative processes, which gave the local community members a platform to envision the future of their community in the context of local and regional economic developments.

Irvine et al. (2022) discussed a CV conducted for the peri-urban area north of Bangkok city in Thailand. The visions of alternative futures for the region were guided by a 'Smart City framework', which considered several topics: smart environment; smart economy; smart energy; smart mobility; smart people; smart living; smart governance; and had a focus on community wellbeing supported by information and communication technology (Irvine et al., 2022). Community and industry surveys (face-to-face and online) were employed to

solicit visions of possible futures for the region, coupled with in-depth stakeholder interviews in which draft designs were discussed. The aim was to envision the transformation of the peri-urban area into a smart district. This study not only revealed community issues, but also offered design solutions that were effective in addressing the community concerns.

CV can mobilise local community support for social investment projects (Sheppard et al., 2011) and may contribute to the acquisition of a social licence to operate a large-scale project (Vanclay et al., 2015; Vanclay & Hanna, 2019). Failure to involve local communities in the conceptualisation and planning of social interventions and other community-based projects may hamper the success of the projects, even though they may be intended to benefit the communities (Esteves & Vanclay, 2009). For example, Mukwada et al. (2018) showed how intervention efforts to control the spread of an alien invasive plant species (*Acacia mearnsii*) in the Golden Gate Highlands National Park in South Africa were hampered by the lack of support from the local communities, even though the project had socio-economic benefits for the community, such as employment creation. Had the Golden Gate Highlands National Park communities been engaged in a participatory process, it is likely that their buy-in would have been gained. Participatory SIA empowers local communities to make informed decisions based on knowledge and understanding of the benefits expected from a social investment project (Esteves et al., 2012).

The significance of CV to the sustainability of social investment projects cannot be over-emphasised. CV enables a greater understanding and recognition of the values and aspirations of local communities in decision making and policy development processes (Chitakira et al., 2012b). It enables ‘community familiarity’, that is, getting to know the real issues in the community (Irvine et al., 2022). In conservation projects, CV can raise local conservation awareness and mobilise local conservation efforts. Thus, CV and undertaking SIA with local communities can encourage local people to assume ownership of the social investment project and give their approval and support to it.

COMMUNITY VISIONING AND SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Often, large-scale projects introduce major changes into the local communities, including changes to the local identity, livelihoods and employment options, and land use changes. There can be significant influx of people into the area in response to new opportunities, which are generally associated with negative impacts as well as some economic benefits (see Chapter 26). The rapid growth induced by project activities can have many detrimental impacts, especially on increased demand on services. The fundamental changes to a community and its local environment that are triggered by a project alter local people’s perceptions of the future of their local community and of their own future. It also changes the options available to the community. These are issues that should be considered in SIA.

As a form of mitigation for the impacts on local communities, a strategy frequently supported by projects is assistance to local governments and local communities related to their planning for the future (with or without the project). Typically, this includes facilitating a CV process. This is because undertaking a CV process is a very appropriate thing to do when a community is facing a major change. The action of doing a CV is often prompted and financially supported by projects because many local governments (especially in rural areas undergoing transformation) lack the commitment, comprehension and/or capacity to undertake this

themselves. It is also something that is directly and logically connected to the project, but of course it is imperative that it be done as a completely independent process, facilitated by an independent practitioner chosen by the local community. Any perception of influence by the company or project would be highly detrimental to the success of the process.

Whether or not a proposed large-scale project creates major social impacts depends, at least to some extent, on the degree of alignment between what actually happens and what the community members expected or envisioned. However, some community members may have little idea of what they want in the future. CV can assist in clarifying their thoughts about this. The aspirations of a community can also be expressed in the CV process, and this can assist the SIA in determining appropriate social investment projects and community development projects. It might also affect the benefit-sharing arrangements that are negotiated.

TOOLS AND METHODS APPLICABLE IN COMMUNITY VISIONING PROCESSES

It is essential that SIA practitioners and CV facilitators have a good understanding of appropriate participatory approaches and methods so that they can make informed decisions about how to conduct effective and inclusive processes. Practitioners should carefully select participatory methods that suit the intended outcomes of the process and involve local communities at the different phases of the development of social investment projects, from pre-design analysis (conceptual design) to post-development (Geekiyana et al., 2021). There are many tools that can be used, which may or may not be applicable in certain instances, depending on the local context. Table 35.1 shows some of the tools and methods that have been applied in various places. There are overlaps between the methods in this table, and some fundamentally similar methods are given different names by various authors. For instance, there is an overlap between workshops, meetings, forums and community discussions. Furthermore, what Geekiyana et al. (2021) call ‘infographics’ is more-or-less what Sheppard et al. (2011) refer to as ‘conceptual framing’. There are many resources available that provide further information about CV and similar approaches, including: Green et al. (2000); National Civic League (2000); Maine State Planning Office (2003); Sanginga & Chitsike (2005); Center for Rural Pennsylvania (2006); Evans et al. (2006); Sarkissian & Hurford (2010); and Situate (2019).

AN EXAMPLE OF COMMUNITY VISIONING

A non-governmental organisation, the Wildlands Conservation Trust, helped to facilitate the creation of the Usuthu Gorge Community Conservation Area on the border between Mozambique, South Africa and Swaziland (now called Eswatini) as a new protected area (WildTrust, n.d.). This was done as part of the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Provincial Biodiversity Stewardship programme, which was being run by Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, the conservation board of the KZN provincial government, in South Africa. The creation of the 4,000 hectare protected area occurred after extensive engagement with the local community, and thus it was called a ‘Community Conservation Area’ (CCA) (Peace Parks Foundation, 2005). The establishment of the Usuthu Gorge CCA was funded jointly by the public and private sector. The bulk of the funding (R5.4 million, about USD 900,000 at the time) was provided by the South

Table 35.1 Tools and methods to assist community visioning

Tool or method	Purpose/context/description	Example references
Annotated diagrams	Annotated diagrams are relatively simple photos, maps, project plans or diagrams to which an annotation is applied to illustrate and explain particular features, e.g. local environmental and livelihood concerns.	Chitakira et al. (2012b)
Art and picture drawing	Arts-based methods are especially relevant for visioning with marginalised groups as they enable the excavation of silenced voices, as well as imagining and concretising new visions and alternative ways of presenting visions.	Malka & Huss (2023)
Conceptual framing (scenario cubes)	Scenario cubes are used with local stakeholders to generate different change scenarios that include various options.	Sheppard et al. (2011)
Deliberative mapping	Deliberative mapping is a socio-technical approach to scenario making for appraising alternative courses of action by combining quantitative decision analysis with qualitative participatory deliberation. Participants comprise both local community members and specialists.	Bellamy et al. (2022)
Digital workshops	Meetings based on virtual perception deploying interactive 3D visualisation that support participants' perception in visioning process. In urban design process digital workshops raise the level of engagement among stakeholders.	Beattie et al. (2020)
Discussions and direct ranking	Small groups in which participants discuss and prioritise (rank) ideas.	Malley et al. (2017)
Focus groups	Small groups of participants with common characteristics (age, gender, social status) consider their common problems and needs, often with an external facilitator. To avoid domination by any group, stakeholders are invited to visioning discussions in their respective categories, based on their roles and interests in the community and/or attributes like gender, age, social status or home location. Traditionally, focus groups are face-to-face, but with technological development, virtual platforms like Webex, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams or Zoom may be used.	Becker et al. (2003); Chitakira et al. (2012b); Geekiyanage et al. (2021)
Future-oriented thinking	This implies a hybrid way of thinking about the future, which combines normative, exploratory and predictive rationales. This approach simultaneously addresses different questions relating to what the future should be, could be, and probably will be, in an effort to achieve meaningful visioning and planning about the future.	Hope et al. (2022)
Geographic information system	GIS potentially have much use in providing background information for the visioning process, for example by georeferencing local heritage resources and other important sites.	Soteropoulos et al. (2021)
Infographics	An infographic is a visual representation of an idea or process, and is used to present complex concepts to diverse audiences. They may be simple images, or charts, diagrams or posters that represent information or data. They can be drawn by hand or produced by software.	Geekiyanage et al. (2021); OECD (2015); Tamarack Institute (2017)
Live streaming, videos and presentations	The use of presentations made in advance of a meeting, for example by PowerPoint. They might be presented 'live', or they could be pre-recorded videos. To enable greater access, they might be placed on YouTube or the project or local government website for interested people to view at a time that suits them.	Geekiyanage et al. (2021)
Online reflection tools	Online reflection tools are any online digital technology that help people to reflect on a particular topic. A typical example is blogging, and associated commentary. In a community visioning context, these tools help people determine, understand and discuss the social impacts and expected benefits of a projects and their plans for the future.	Imperiale & Vanclay (2016); Cochrane (2015)
Participatory diagnosis	Stakeholder groups that are organised to identify main socio-environmental concerns in the community.	Chitakira et al. (2012b)

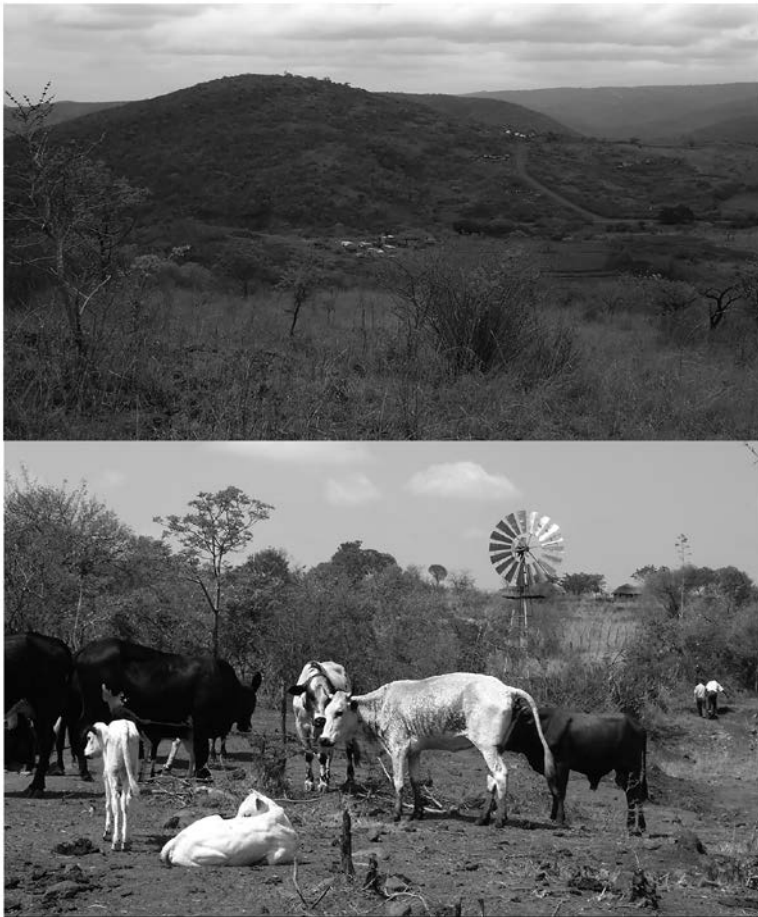
Tool or method	Purpose/context/description	Example references
Participatory visualisation and community mapping	Participatory visualisation and community mapping are useful tools to facilitate a shared vision of local cultural and natural heritage resources and for initiating dialogue and planning in a CV process. They may also utilise participatory GIS and virtual mapping tools.	Geekiyana et al. (2021); Tamarack Institute (2017)
Photo elicitation and photovoice	Photo elicitation refers to the use of photos to assist in initiating discussions about significant places or objects. The photos can be provided by a facilitator or can be taken by the participants themselves (photovoice). Photos help people connect community-based meanings to potential actions in their local environment.	Stewart et al. (2004); Aber et al. (2017)
Printed material	Printed material may be newsletters, flyers, posters, factsheets, brochures, or reports.	Geekiyana et al. (2021)
Public meetings; multi-stakeholder workshops	Face-to-face meetings during which stakeholders discuss and reflect on perceived common problems and needs. May involve presentations followed by question-and-answer sessions. External consultants with experience in facilitating stakeholder visioning may be hired to facilitate workshops.	Geekiyana et al. (2021); FGV (2009); Malley et al. (2017); Vanclay et al. (2015)
Site visits/tours	Participants visit the project site, or a similar project elsewhere. May be useful when creating scenarios.	Geekiyana et al. (2021)
Surveys	Involving face-to-face and online; in-depth stakeholder interviews; draft designs and visions prepared.	Irvine et al. (2022)
World café	A simple, effective, flexible, participatory tool used in community development and for facilitating dialogue in large and heterogeneous groups. It is based on seven principles: (1) set the context; (2) create a hospitable space; (3) explore questions that matter; (4) encourage everyone's contribution; (5) cross-pollinate and connect diverse perspectives; (6) listen together for patterns, insights and deeper questions; and (7) harvest and share collective discoveries. Participants are seated in a café format in groups of four or five. Normally, three consecutive 20-minute rounds of conversation are held.	Löhr et al. (2020)

African Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism. Contributions were made by three private organisations: the Wildlands Conservation Trust (R900,000; about USD 150,000); the Peace Parks Foundation (R70,000; about USD 12,000) and the Ford Foundation (R330,000; about USD 55,000) (Peace Parks Foundation, 2005).

The Usuthu Gorge CCA lies in the Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation Area (TFCA), whose primary goal is to achieve a balance between the conservation of natural resources and their sustainable utilisation by local communities as stewards. The anticipated benefits of the CCA to the community included job creation and income generation from tourism, in addition to the controlled and sustainable harvesting of natural resources, such as wood, grass and wild fruits. Hunting and fishing were restricted. TFCA's present opportunities for local communities to collaborate in conservation and tourism projects in a kind of Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) model. In CBNRM, local communities are actively involved in the planning, management and utilisation of local resources, and derive socio-economic benefits, such as income from tourism, job creation and livelihood improvement (USAID, 2013).

Chitakira et al. (2012b) facilitated CV in the local communities adjacent to the Usuthu Gorge CCA to establish the community members' envisioned futures about their area and how their visions related to the proposed developments associated with the CCA, one of which was ecoagriculture. Ecoagriculture is an approach for managing multi-functional landscapes that are intended to achieve a balance between the utilisation and conservation of natural resources (Buck et al., 2006). Ecoagriculture refers to strategies that integrate agricultural production

with biodiversity conservation at the landscape level, but also have a goal of livelihood improvement in the local communities. Stakeholder consultation conducted prior to the CV revealed that ecoagriculture was an appropriate development model to achieve the objectives of the Usuthu Gorge CCA (Chitakira et al., 2012a). Figure 35.1 shows some of the features and land uses of the local landscape under focus during the CV. The CV was a face-to-face exercise, with participants grouped according to gender, age-groups and location (village of residence). Public venues, such as schools and community halls, were used for the visioning meetings. The facilitators supplied the materials and supplies used during the CV, including: topographical maps of the local community; flip charts; coloured markers, pens and pencils; notepads; masking tape and double-sided tape; and self-adhesive notes.



Source: The author.

Figure 35.1 Photographs of the local landscapes under focus during the CV process

There are various steps to follow when conducting a CV exercise. The choice of steps is dependent upon factors such as: the visioning method and tools being used; the nature and capabilities of the participants; and the theme being discussed (Okubo, 2000; Sanginga & Chitsike, 2005; Evans et al., 2006; Bellamy et al., 2022). Chitakira et al. (2012b) structured the CV process into four main phases, as illustrated in Figure 35.2. Each phase was allocated approximately 60 to 90 minutes. Figure 35.3 shows images of participants during the CV process. The community vision that resulted from the process, which was compiled from the views of all participating groups, was: ‘To achieve better living standards supported by improved farming and non-farming activities, based on locally available natural resources which enable diversified livelihoods’ (Chitakira et al., 2012b, p. 1235). This vision strongly aligned with the goals of the Usuthu Gorge CCA in general, and the objectives of ecoagriculture in particular.

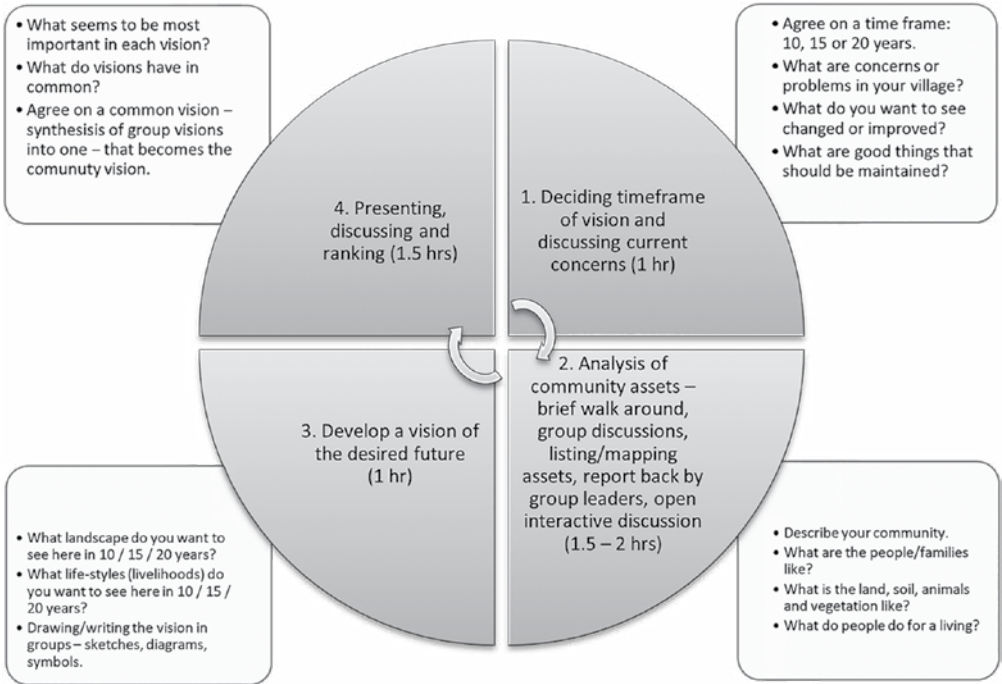


Figure 35.2 Steps followed during the visioning process

After establishing the community vision, the next step was to relate the vision to the overall TFCA goal in general and to the ecoagriculture objectives in particular. This would give an indication of the extent to which the existence of the Usuthu Gorge CCA would meet the expectations of the local community and align with the community vision. During the CV process, participants created lists of their local environmental and livelihood concerns, as well as their vision of the future. Representatives from the focus groups took turns to present their views to other participants, which was followed by open discussion, primarily on the feasibility of the vision and on the potential impacts of the developments on their livelihoods. The perceived ecological and economic benefits and improved quality of life that would arise from the CCA were motivating factors that led to participants expressing willingness to work towards achieving the shared community vision.



Figure 35.3 Presenting, discussing and ranking during the visioning process

PRACTICAL THINGS TO GET THE BEST RESULTS FROM COMMUNITY VISIONING

CV is unlikely to achieve its intended objectives unless communities and other stakeholders are ready to carry out a comprehensive and inclusive visioning and planning process (Walzer & Hamm, 2010). Below are some suggested practical considerations that will enhance the effectiveness of CV. These measures are likely to be applicable across various settings, including rural or urban, and more or less literate communities.

- *Method and tools:* CV facilitators should decide which method and tools to employ. They should consider the contextual factors, such as the participants' literacy levels, and access to resources, e.g. digital devices, if these are to be used.
- *Language of communication:* Where facilitators of CV are not members of the local community or do not speak the same language spoken by the local people, effort should

be made to explain the visioning exercise in the local language. Any members of the community who cannot read or write should be able to participate effectively.

- *Facilitation pace:* Participants should be allowed ample time to reflect, discuss, write down or revise their opinions before deciding on or finalising their shared vision.
- *Objectives formulation:* Depending on the levels of literacy of the participants, facilitators of the CV process may need to provide guidance on how to frame specific, measurable, achievable, realistic/relevant and time-bound (SMART) objectives (French & Gagne, 2010). Participants, particularly the less literate, may require support and guidance in formulating clear, precise and unambiguous goals, and in thinking about indicators of what is to be considered as success, and how success will be measured. It is possible that local participants may set unrealistically high goals. Furthermore, local communities may lack the competencies to determine the relevance of the objectives to the overall vision or in setting realistic timelines, and therefore may require support in this.
- *Nature of concepts and information discussed:* The scenarios visualised and information discussed should be understandable to participants and relevant to their situations and lived experience. The relevance of concepts discussed and participants' familiarity with them tend to motivate participation. Sheppard et al. (2011) reported on a visioning process in British Columbia, Canada, where the success of the CV process was attributed to the extensive use of realistic visualisations in combination with photographs, maps and charts. Use of visual media enabled participants to maintain high levels of engagement during the process.
- *A fairly-balanced team of participants:* Having a well-balanced team of participants composed of representatives of the various social groups of the community is critical for the success of visioning programmes. Failure to include all social groups or sectors of the community makes the CV limited to the perspectives of the participating groups, which could mean that potential perspectives are missed (Chitakira et al., 2012b).
- *Check on dominant groups:* Developing a shared vision implies reaching consensus between community members who are likely to have different interests and perceptions. Often, communities are heterogeneous and composed of people from different socio-economic classes and/or social groups, having differing interests. Some dominant participants might try to make decisions affecting the whole community without the input of other community members. When certain interest groups dominate, this limits the ability of other stakeholders to voice their concerns and interests (Becker et al., 2003). It is possible that the outcome of a CV process represents the insights and interests of the more vocal and influential individuals or more powerful social groups rather than be a genuine broad community vision (Chitakira et al., 2012b). Therefore, facilitators of visioning processes should consider appropriate ways to minimise the chances of this happening and ensure that the diverse interests and views of all participants are considered (Beattie et al., 2020). One way to avoid domination by some groups is to invite stakeholders to visioning meetings in their respective categories, based on their roles, interests and social status in the community. However, then there is still the challenge of combining the visions of the different groups into a single vision for the community as a whole. There are complex questions in this regard. For instance, who should combine the visions? Should the facilitators do this assuming this will bring neutrality, which might seem like local community members are being excluded from creating the final product (vision), which arguably compromises the principles of participation? Should the different groups or their representa-

tives come together to combine their visions? If so, there is still a possibility of the views of the dominant group overriding those of the less vocal people. Facilitators should consider this carefully and be transparent about their methodology, its justifications and limitations.

CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF COMMUNITY VISIONING

There are many technological advances that can be utilised to enhance inclusiveness and stakeholder participation. Various writers have noted that advances in digital tools have created opportunities for increased human interaction (Beattie et al., 2020; Guenther et al., 2020). CV can make use of new resources and tools that can enhance the eliciting, sharing and utilisation of local knowledge and expertise. Such tools include mobile computing technology and online mapping (Gillette & Hurley, 2018). Residents can record photo-narrations using mobile devices and store them electronically. Utilisation of mobile devices can enable the active involvement of residents who, for whatever reason, cannot attend face-to-face planning meetings (Gillette & Hurley, 2018). Furthermore, digital tools allow the participation of larger numbers of stakeholders who may not be able to be physically accommodated otherwise (Beattie et al., 2020).

Information and communication technology (ICT) approaches can support the shared vision, for instance, through harnessing the processing of information (Irvine et al., 2022). The shared vision of the community can be data driven and technology can be utilised for smart monitoring as well as for smart and timely decision making (Irvine et al., 2022). Technological devices provide opportunities for more interactive and effective CV. As such, ongoing technological development and evolution ought to be embraced and utilised for CV. The development of digital applications compatible with relatively cheap and more affordable mobile devices could be a welcome idea for scenario planning and other visioning exercises.

CONCLUSION

Community visioning is an important tool for communities affected by projects, and it is closely related to social impact assessment in several ways. First, it can help local people comprehend the possible changes that a proposed project may bring, and assist in making decisions about whether to accept or reject the proposed development. This is especially important in situations where First Nation, Indigenous or traditional groups might have territorial rights and the ability to give or deny their free, prior and informed consent (Hanna & Vanclay, 2013). Second, it will help in preparing and planning for changes that will arise. Third, it will help them in negotiating with the project about possible mitigation measures and benefit-sharing arrangements (see Chapter 27), and potentially impact and benefit agreements (see Chapter 34).

SIA practitioners can assist in this process by advocating for CV to be undertaken, and if not facilitating the process themselves (because of a potential perceived conflict of interest), assisting in the identification of possible facilitators. Ideally, information from the SIA process would inform the CV process, especially in relation to the likely impacts from the project. Furthermore, the outcomes from the CV process may assist in the planning of mitigation measures and the development of social investment strategies that might happen in the SIA

process, or at least be part of the responsibilities of the social performance staff in the project and/or the social practitioner consultant engaged to assist.

Visioning needs to be done at several points in the lifecycle of a project. Obviously, it is highly desirable for a CV process to occur before a project commences. A crucial time to repeat the CV process is prior to project closure, when local communities need to plan for a future life without the project (Parsons et al., 2013). Since the values and aspirations of a community are likely to change over time, the community vision should be updated periodically, perhaps every 10 years or so.

Notwithstanding all the advantages of undertaking CV, there are some problems and issues that have been identified by various authors (Shipley & Newkirk, 1998; Shipley et al., 2004; Gibson & Clanahan, 2021). Some government staff and/or facilitators may be unable or unwilling to articulate a coherent theory or rationale for visioning, and thus poorly inform the participants about the process, leading to suboptimal outcomes. The rationale for undertaking CV of some champions may be questionable, for example some advocates might have ulterior motives and see the CV process as an opportunity for them to have undue or improper influence. Actually, the potential for this distortion to occur might lead to the motives of all advocates being questioned, even when they were being genuine. There is potential confusion in terminology, with ‘visions’ being mixed up or used interchangeably with other terms such as goals, objectives, values, etc. In some situations where religious fervour is part of the local culture, there is potential for community visions to be influenced by spiritual visions. There is also potential confusion between shared community visions and the idea of visionary leaders and that leaders need to have visions in order to lead. Sometimes, visioning is hard work, and people may be lacking in energy or creativity. This may lead to recycling old ideas, or those used in other places rather than arrive at new ideas that are more suited to the current context. Finally, visioning may be confused with participation. Visioning is part of community engagement, but is not the full extent of participation. Great care must be taken to ensure that the CV process is not used to avoid or manipulate the democratic process.

Despite these issues, CV still has considerable potential, at least when done in a genuine way with a skilled facilitator. To encourage success and effectiveness of visioning processes, Elmallah et al. (2022) suggest the following principles be used to guide the CV process: be place-based and contextual; address the root causes and legacies of inequality; shift the balance of power; create new, cooperative and participatory systems of governance and ownership; and adopt a rights-based approach.

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36. Attributing significance to social impacts

Marielle Rowan

WHAT DOES ATTRIBUTING SIGNIFICANCE MEAN AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Attributing significance is the act of ascribing importance, quality, or value to an impact caused by a project or initiative. Understanding and assigning this value to a potential, currently unexperienced change is part of the impact prediction process. Challenges and opportunities abound, and to achieve robust results, Social Impact Assessment (SIA) practitioners need to use theoretical and practical experience in impact prediction (pre occurrence) and management (dealing with reality) as well as contextual knowledge and insight.

Impact significance categorisation is an important step that occurs twice in the overall SIA process. After characterising the socio-economic conditions and people's activities on-site, near site, and in the wider project area of influence, and identifying the likely social impacts, the attribution of significance to impacts is undertaken for the first time. Management measures are identified and then the same impacts are analysed again with a new attribution of significance taking into account the application of these measures. Mitigation and enhancement measures, and monitoring with adaptive management, are expected to positively affect the level of significance of the social impacts by making the negative aspects less significant.

Attributing significance both with and without management measures are essential activities for the utility of an SIA. However, many SIAs only focus on presenting baseline data. Other SIAs identify impacts as positive or negative, but provide little commentary, analysis, or justification of each impact's significance. Undeniably, the key findings of an SIA need to be not just what the impacts are, but how important they are. Even though the process of attributing significance is required twice during an SIA, and is critical to the impact assessment system, there is little research or practitioner reflection on this process (Lawrence, 2013; Lyhne & Kornov, 2013; Ehrlich & Ross, 2015). Most literature focuses on types of impacts and how to manage them. There is less guidance on how to attribute significance.

SIA uses qualitative approaches more than most other forms of impact assessment (e.g. noise, hydrology, biodiversity). For SIA, attribution of significance benefits from practitioners' experience with similar types of projects, knowledge of the project area of influence, and understanding of the socio-cultural-political characteristics of affected people. What also sets SIA apart from other forms of impact assessment is that the impacted entities, humans, continually change and modify their behaviour and opinions as project information and rumours circulate and as project stakeholder engagement activities are conducted (Rowan, 2009; Vanclay et al., 2015; Golder, 2019). Unlike a river, bird, or landscape, which will not change the way it behaves when a project is talked about, as soon as people hear any information (or perceive a lack of information) about a project, they begin analysing the meaning of the messages or lack of messages for themselves and for the groups to which they belong (Vanclay, 2012). They may even create new interest groups to oppose or support projects (Rowan, 2009). Hence, perception and communication about social impacts can be as important as the actual

manifestation of the impact. People's perceptions are fluid, and can change over time. They can be influenced, even manipulated, by others for political or special interest agendas.

The attribution of significance to social impacts has received little attention in many national legislative frameworks. Lenders' standards also say little, and they lack precision about the procedure for attributing significance. The European Investment Bank's *Environmental and Social Standards* (EIB, 2022) has some explanation, with an annex (1a) specifying that the significance of impacts contributes to determining the need for an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA). It says that there should be particular regard to: 'the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (such as the geographical area and amount of project-affected people and communities); the nature (including the transboundary nature), intensity and complexity, probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact; cumulation of the impact with the impact of other projects and activities; the possibility of effectively reducing the impact' (EIB, 2022, p. 7).

The process of attributing significance to social impacts developed from looking at how environmental assessment practitioners did it (Rowan, 2009). Some authors refer to the process of attributing significance to impacts or risks as 'determining', 'assessing', or 'evaluating' the significance. I prefer 'attributing', especially for SIA and people, because this allows a dialogue among those who may have different perceptions at different times in the SIA process. 'Assessing' is better used for social impacts to reflect the whole SIA process, which is more than attributing significance. The word 'determining' (determination) seems more finite and less responsive. Also, 'evaluating' seems to be based on greater certainty than actually applies in this process, which is about forecasting what will occur in the future.

The process of attributing significance generally results in impacts being categorised as significant or not significant. This is relevant for all users of SIAs, such as project proponents, affected people, regulators, investors, and lenders. The project proponent and regulator look at the results from this process to know where to allocate resources and budget to make the project better suited to its objectives, context, and community acceptability. Affected people will consider how closely the outcomes are aligned with their reality and how their opinions are reflected and addressed in the SIA. Investors and lenders use the results to inform their decision-making about involvement in the project and what their conditions for financial involvement might be. When the assessment process deems an impact to be significant, there should be more staff effort and greater project budget assigned for managing the impact compared to a non-significant impact.

Using magnitude and sensitivity to attribute significance means that SIA report readers and stakeholders will be able to understand how the social impacts were assessed and how they can be compared against other impacts, such as waste, hydrology, noise, traffic, and biodiversity. Having an overall vision of impacts and their significance is essential for decision-makers. Affected people and other stakeholders can use the same words and concepts for discussing the full range of impacts in a similar manner, which helps with comprehension and exchange of opinions and knowledge.

WHAT ARE THE COMMON METHODS FOR ATTRIBUTING SIGNIFICANCE IN SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT?

An SIA identifies social impacts and social risks, which have different methodologies for considering how important the social change caused by the project will be (discussed below). Impacts are assessed as being significant or not significant, and risks are ranked on a continuum from low to high. There are two main methods used to attribute a significance rating to impacts: qualitative and quantitative. They use similar criteria, namely impact magnitude and sensitivity (or vulnerability) of those impacted. For the qualitative approach, these two criteria are typically categorised (see below for how this is completed), and then combined into an overall significance rating. For the quantitative approach, various individual factors are given a numerical score, the numbers are combined, and the significance rating is presented.

Magnitude Criteria

Magnitude criteria recognise that the size of the impact influences its importance. Magnitude criteria address size in various spheres, for instance, spatial, temporal, regularity, and more. Most magnitude criteria used for social impacts consider the factors listed in Table 36.1.

Some SIAs include an additional magnitude factor, differentiating between direct and indirect or induced impacts. The inference is that a direct interaction between the project and the affected group is more important than an impact that is created subsequent to the interaction, or from other activities that happen as a consequence of the project. In such an approach, project-induced in-migration, as an induced impact, may not receive the same weighting as a direct impact like employment creation. However, this could result in a watered-down categorisation. It is preferable for all types of social impacts, namely direct, indirect, induced, and cumulative to receive the same consideration.

In the qualitative approach, magnitude criteria are usually categorised as major, moderate, minor, or negligible, taking in a combination of the factors presented in Table 36.1. In contrast to other ESIA specialisms or forms of impact assessment, it is important that social practitioners use magnitude criteria that reflect the concepts of wellbeing and resilience. Wellbeing is ‘an all-encompassing notion that includes having one’s basic human needs met (e.g. adequate food and water), being in good mental and physical health, having the ability to pursue one’s goals and to thrive, feeling connected to and a part of one’s local community and locality, and a general feeling of being satisfied with life’ (Smyth & Vanclay, 2017, p. 73). Resilience, in the context of SIA, can be defined as the capacity of a person, household or community to recover from impacts that threaten it (Vanclay et al., 2015). Resilience is also about the ability to learn from and adapt to disturbances and change (Imperiale & Vanclay, 2021). Table 36.2 presents SIA magnitude criteria centred around wellbeing and resilience. The definitions include references to aspects of probability, duration and permanency, extent, and variety of impacted groups or resources. ‘Moderate’ and ‘major’ are categories that show an impact has greater consequences for wellbeing and resilience than ‘minor’ or ‘negligible’.

Sensitivity Criteria

The other main criteria to understand significance are an understanding of who is impacted and their vulnerability. In SIA, those impacted may be individuals, households, businesses, social

Table 36.1 Factors that are part of social magnitude categorisation

Factor contributing to magnitude criteria	Reasoning	Terms often used in other forms of impact assessment
The number of people affected	For a negative impact, the greater the number of people affected, the more substantially adverse the impact. For a positive impact, the greater the number of people affected, the more beneficial the impact.	Extent/amount/scale, reflecting size, ranging from few to many, and typically with an actual number indicated.
The variety of groups of people affected	Populations are not homogeneous, nor static. Initiatives can have a spatial area that involves communities in different places and that are severed by natural phenomena (like rivers), administrative boundaries (in different districts or similar), or human built or perceived confines (highways, ethnic or class areas). The greater number of groups of people affected means a more complex impact that needs managing.	Spatial extent/reach/size of area – sometimes including differentiation of the spatial area ranging from within the site boundary to district, regional, national, and international.
Permanency of the impact	A permanent impact is considered more severe than a temporary impact. Impacts that occur over a known period that is long (e.g. project operation) are considered more negative than impacts over a known shorter period (e.g. construction).	Reversibility, ranging from ‘permanent requiring significant intervention to return to baseline’ to ‘no change’.
Frequency of the impact	Negative impacts that create a continuous effect are worse than intermediate effects. For instance, blasting that affects neighbouring community members two or three times during a day for several years is more severe than blasting once a week for a three-month period.	Time period (constancy and periodicity) or regularity of the impact – ranging from temporary to ongoing.
Compliance with recognised legal standards and established professional criteria	For impacts that cause effects, the further they are above national or international target thresholds or limits, the more serious the consequence.	Adherence, ranging from within the limit to substantially exceeding a national standard or international guidance.

Source: Author.

Table 36.2 Magnitude criteria for social impacts

Categorisation	Definition
Major	An impact that would have permanent implications for the long term affecting the wellbeing of many people across a broad cross-section of the population and affecting various elements of the local communities’ and/ or workers’ resilience.
Moderate	An impact that continues for the medium/non-permanent term throughout the project life and affects the wellbeing of specific groups of people and affecting specific elements of the local communities’ and/ or workers’ resilience.
Minor	An impact that occurs periodically or over the short term throughout the life of the project affecting the wellbeing of a small number of people and with little effect on the local communities’ and/ or workers’ resilience.
Negligible	A potential impact that is very short in duration so that the socio-economic baseline remains largely consistent and there is no detectable effect on the wellbeing of people or the local communities’ and/ or workers’ resilience.

Source: Author, revised from Mott MacDonald.

Table 36.3 *The social groups and resources in an SIA for an energy project in sub-Saharan Africa*

Impacted social groups or community resources	Social impact
Residents, landowners, and land users of villages 'X, Y, Z' and settlements within the project area of influence and area of interest	Physical and economic displacement requiring compensation Various effects of project-induced in-migration
'A' primary school	Relocation of education service
Tourists to 'B' wildlife reserve	Diminished tourism experience during construction
'C' hotel business	Diminished amenity resulting in less client interest
Visitors to graves and sacred sites in 'X' and 'Z'	Relocation of graves
Residents of settlements 'T' 'U' 'Z' through which access routes to the project site pass	Improved local roads and access Various effects of project-induced in-migration
Construction and operations workers	Employment generation during construction Employment generation during operations
Road users of primary, secondary, and tertiary roads in the project area of influence	Improved local roads and access
Households and companies with electricity connections	Generation of electricity

Source: Author.

groups, communities, and economic networks including users of a business or service. As communities and groups can overlap or merge seamlessly, defining social groups can be complicated (Rowan, 2009). Recognising this complexity, the SIA practitioner should describe the specific group affected by each particular impact. Depending on the context of the project, a community resource, such as a communal asset, amenity, business, service, opportunity, or social capital, may be impacted. Table 36.3 presents a project example of social groups and resources, and the impacts that affect them.

Sensitivity takes into account people's profiles and conditions. The concept of sensitivity focuses on people's existing vulnerability and their ability and control over and access to resources to cope with the changes created by project activities. Vanclay et al. (2015, p. 98) defined social vulnerability as 'a situation or condition characterized by low resilience and/or higher risk and reduced ability of an individual, group or community to cope with shock or negative impacts.' They explained that vulnerability is often associated with having low socio-economic status, disability, ethnicity, or one or more of the many factors that influence people's ability to access resources and development opportunities. Sensitivity criteria used in SIA consider people's capacity to cope with project impacts that affect their access to, or control over, additional or alternative social resources of a similar nature, ultimately affecting their wellbeing. In comparison to less-sensitive or less-vulnerable people, groups of people who are more sensitive or vulnerable are generally considered to have less capacity to absorb the adverse changes or shocks that project activities may cause. Similarly, they may be less able to benefit from any positive changes the project might create.

In the definitions for SIA sensitivity criteria in Table 36.4, a community's vulnerability is generally measured in terms of its resilience or lack of resilience to loss of community facilities, whereas an individual or household's vulnerability is generally considered in relation to their resilience or lack of resilience to deprivation and loss of livelihood assets or opportunities (such as jobs, productive land, or natural resources). Poverty is often crudely measured by average household income, but it actually is a multi-dimensional concept (Kakwani & Silber, 2007). In societies with greater inequality, econometric measures may mean poverty

Table 36.4 Sensitivity criteria

Sensitivity	Definition
High	People who are already vulnerable with very little capacity and means to absorb proposed changes or with very little access to alternative similar resources, sites, or services.
Medium	People who are already vulnerable with limited capacity and means to absorb proposed changes or with some access to alternative similar resources, sites, or services.
Low	People who are not vulnerable with some capacity and means to absorb proposed changes and with some access to alternative similar resources, sites, or services.
Negligible	People who are not vulnerable with plentiful capacity and means to absorb proposed changes and with good access to alternative similar resources, sites, or services.

Source: Author, revised from Mott MacDonald.

can be hidden. Impacts that increase impoverishment risks contribute to vulnerability. Impoverishment risks associated with project-induced displacement include landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalisation, increased morbidity and mortality, food insecurity, loss of access to common property resources, and social disarticulation (Cernea, 1997). In some settings, e.g. high-income countries, vulnerability to social exclusion rather than to impoverishment risks may be more relevant for sensitivity criteria (Rowan, 2009).

It is important for SIA practitioners to recognise differences between and among individuals and groups of people, and to consider intersectionality (the interconnected nature of social categorisations such as gender, ethnicity, class, and age; see Chapter 16), which also influences vulnerability and the risk of exclusion. The environmental and social standards of many lenders, notably the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB, 2020) and the European Investment Bank (2022), place increasing emphasis on assessing and understanding vulnerability and gender aspects, often with reference to intersectionality.

Combining Magnitude Criteria with Sensitivity to Attribute Significance: The Qualitative Approach

In common usage, ‘significance’ can mean the quality of being worthy of attention or being important. An objective of an SIA study is to identify which impacts need attention and resources so that they can be managed. Being able to explain and discuss how significance is determined using magnitude and sensitivity criteria, rather than jumping to a statement that an impact is significant or not (as some ESIA do), contributes to the robustness of SIA. With a qualitative approach, the significance of social impacts can be attributed by considering the interaction between magnitude criteria and sensitivity criteria as presented in Table 36.5. Some practitioners may use modified definitions for the medium and moderate categories to prevent under-estimation. First, the practitioner needs to decide whether the foreseen change, on its own without any management measure, is primarily a positive/beneficial or a negative/adverse impact. Then, the magnitude category and sensitivity category are used together to plot the significance. Impacts that are assessed as being ‘moderate’ or ‘major’ (shown in bold in Table 36.5) are identified as significant, meaning that they are of importance and needing more attention and resources. Impacts that are rated as ‘minor’ or ‘negligible’ are identified as not significant, meaning they are less problematic or need less attention. Mitigation and enhancement measures should be identified for both significant and non-significant impacts;

Table 36.5 *Significance matrix*

Significance	Magnitude (Adverse)				Magnitude (Beneficial)		
	Major	Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major
High	Major	Major	Moderate	Negligible	Moderate	Major	Major
Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major
Low	Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Minor	Moderate
Negligible	Minor	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Minor

Source: Mott MacDonald.

however, understanding significance helps focus the resources (human and financial) needed for the management measures, including controls, mitigation, enhancement, and monitoring.

Some ESIA practitioners do not assign magnitude criteria to positive impacts. I would recommend that it is useful to do so, in particular for SIAs where affected people and stakeholders are interested in a project being as beneficial as possible. Similar to managing adverse impacts, magnitude and sensitivity criteria can provide insight as to how to improve outcomes from positive impacts. Practitioners can use the criteria categorisations to identify measures that create more resilience, share the positive impacts among more people or groups, or make the benefits last for a longer period of time.

Combining Magnitude Criteria with Sensitivity to Attribute Significance: The Quantitative Approach

The quantitative approach uses similar themes as in the qualitative approach but applies a numerical ranking. All the numerical rankings of individual factors are added up, and the total is used to indicate the category of significance. Box 36.1 provides the quantitative methodology used in a roads project in South America where the factors are differentially weighted and increased by different increments. The methodology of the ESIA needs to explain the weighting.

BOX 36.1 QUANTITATIVE CATEGORISATION FROM A ROAD PROJECT ESIA IN SOUTH AMERICA

Impact is equal to the combination (by simple addition) of the following factor rankings:

- Magnitude/intensity (low, medium, high, very high, total with a respective score of 1, 2, 4, 8, 12)
- Extension (exact, local or partial, extensive, total, critical with a respective score of 1, 2, 4, 8, 12)
- Manifestation time (long term, medium term, short term, immediate, critical with a respective scale of 1, 2, 3, 4, 8)
- Persistence (fleeting – less than one year, temporary – one to three years, persistent – four to ten years, and permanent – more than ten years with a respective score 1, 2, 3, 4)
- Reversibility (short-term – less than one-year, medium term – one to five years, long term – five to ten years, and irreversible with a respective score of 1, 2, 3, 4)

- Synergies (no synergy or simple, synergy, and many synergies with a respective score of 1, 2, 4)
- Accumulation (simple or accumulative with a respective score of 1, 4)
- Ranking for effect (indirect/secondary and direct with a respective score of 1, 4)
- Period (irregular or not continuous, periodically and continuous with a respective score of 1, 2, 4)
- Recoverability (immediate – less than a year, medium – one to five years, long term – after five years, mitigable or compensable, or unrecoverable with a respective score of 1, 2, 3, 4, 8).

For each impact, the factors and corresponding scores are listed; then the numbers are added to produce a total, which identifies the categorisation: 0–25 irrelevant impact; 26–50 moderate impact; 51–75 severe impact; and 75+ critical impact. Severe and critical impacts are considered to be ‘significant’.

Arguably, the quantitative approach is a more complicated version of the qualitative approach. However, the identification of numerical weighting is just as subjective as the qualitative categorisation process, with both needing some professional experience to explain the reasons for selecting the scores. Sometimes, the scales increase exponentially and sometimes not; this is a professional decision. Tagliani and Walter (2018) discussed how an assessor’s experience and professional profile influence this process, even though once the values are assigned, the subjectivity of the process becomes hidden behind a seemingly objective number. The presentation of a number in the quantitative approach seems less clear than a category (such as moderate significance) in the qualitative approach because there is no standard numbering scale or common scoring totals used by practitioners. For instance, in the example in Box 36.1, there was not an explanation why some factors went up to 12, others to 8, and others to 4.

There can be topics where certain organisations use numeric definitions to establish significance. This is often the case in environmental specialisms. For example, relating to noise, air, or water pollution, there are threshold standards for decibels, emissions, and water quality. A social example is from the Asian Development Bank. Its resettlement guidance indicates that a project considered Category A with significant impact would be when 200 or more people experience major impacts, which are defined as ‘being physically displaced from housing or losing 10% or more of their productive (income generating) assets’ (ADB, 2012, p. 8). In resettlement, physical displacement is generally considered more severe than economic displacement (Vanclay, 2017). As the most severe impacts are often the most difficult for people to endure and costly in terms of time, resource provision, and finances for project staff to mitigate or manage well, minimising or avoiding them is more important than focusing only on minimising the aggregate number of people affected or amount of land acquired (World Bank, 2004). In general, when attributing significance, social practitioners look at more than the number or proportion of people or assets that are impacted.

Attribution of Significance to Residual Impacts

The impacts anticipated to remain significant after the implementation of mitigation, enhancement and monitoring measures are called ‘residual impacts’. Often, only adverse impacts are identified as residual impacts. However, a basic concept of SIA is to go beyond doing no harm

and to look at ways to provide benefits and social outcomes, contribute to sustainable development, create shared value, and achieve a social licence to operate. Therefore, positive residual impacts should also be identified (Vanclay et al., 2015). Enhancement measures are contributors, not only to reducing adverse impacts, but also for producing positive residual impacts and improved social outcomes (Esteves et al., 2017). Enhancement measures are actions that create new positive impacts or benefits, increase the reach or amount of positive impacts or benefits, or distribute them more equitably (Rowan & Streather, 2011; João et al., 2011). Some examples of these are: including a community investment activity (e.g. building a dormitory at a local school); widening a road to include a pedestrian lane; and providing training so that more local workers can be hired and fewer non-local staff are needed (also see Chapter 27).

The second round of attributing significance during an SIA takes place after the identification of mitigation, enhancement, monitoring, and management measures to indicate when they are substantial enough to change the impact magnitude and sensitivity criteria rating. For instance, a design change may alter the alignment of a road to avoid structures along the route and thereby reduce the amount of physical and economic displacement. This may change the magnitude criteria ranking from major to moderate, or moderate to minor. The implementation of a Resettlement Action Plan or a Livelihood Restoration Plan might not change the amount of displacement (noting that they are expected to include a description of efforts to reduce resettlement impacts), but can improve the resilience of households to cope with the changes. A vulnerability strategy with mitigation measures to address specific household issues (such as mobility, food provision, care of children or those who are unwell) is key to improving the sensitivity categorisation. The measures may support resilience changing the sensitivity ranking from high to medium, or medium to low. Some mitigation measures may be useful but might not substantially change either the magnitude or sensitivity category. IUCN's ESIA guidance (IUCN, 2020) has a section on understanding significance indicating that there must be consideration of known, acceptable, and readily available good practice management measures to address impacts, taking into account whether the project developer and stakeholders have experience in applying them. This consideration is relevant for the second round of attributing significance and identifying residual impacts. Table 36.6 is an example of how significance attribution details can be presented for a residual influx impact.

Social Risks

In the SIA process, attributing significance is the next step after identifying impacts. Social impacts are 'experienced or felt in either a perceptual (cognitive) or a corporeal (bodily, physical) sense, at any level, for example at the level of an individual person, an economic unit (family/household), a social group (circle of friends), a workplace (a company or government agency), or by community/society generally' (Vanclay et al., 2015, p. 2). However, it is useful to differentiate between impacts and risks. While they are often used interchangeably, they are different. Risk assessment focuses on combining likelihood and severity/harm, whereas impact assessment looks at the convergence of impact magnitude (various factors) with people's sensitivity to the change.

Impact assessment focuses on the results of change processes of higher likelihood, when there is some confidence in their occurrence, whereas risk assessment can include potential

Table 36.6 Residual impacts with mitigation, enhancement, and management measures: a social impact example

Impact	Mitigation/ management plan/ measure	Monitoring topics	Mitigation influence on magnitude	Post-mitigation magnitude	Mitigation influence on sensitivity	Post-mitigation sensitivity	Residual impact	Residual significance
Construction phase Project-induced in-migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recruitment strategy; ● Worker code of conduct; ● Influx management plan; ● Worker accommodation plan; ● Community investment plan; ● Stakeholder engagement plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recruitment methods; ● Anti-social behaviour; ● Gender-based violence; ● Community investment programme; ● Information disclosure, consultation, stakeholder engagement quantity, quality and coverage 	<p>Management measures will be used to minimise influx and construction camp followers, where possible</p>	Moderate (same as pre-mitigation)	Community investment will support local community development efforts and build capacity in local government and civil society social service providers so that they can cope. Community carrying service and resource capacity is not exceeded but community members will still remain sensitive at the time of experiencing impacts.	Medium (down from high)	Moderate adverse (down from major)	Significant

Source: The author, Mott MacDonald Limited.

outcomes that may never occur. Risk assessment and impact assessment also differ in the following ways:

- Risk assessment is always about negative outcomes; impact assessment addresses adverse and positive impacts.
- Risk assessment focuses on likelihood as one of two key factors; impact assessment includes various factors related to the magnitude of the impact plus an identification of who is impacted.
- Impact assessment is more focused on changes that can be expected to occur than on risk assessment, which focuses on potential changes and includes all forms of probability, including those of low likelihood.

Risk assessment uses a hierarchy of risk control to eliminate or mitigate risks; SIA uses both the mitigation hierarchy and enhancement measures. An important objective of an SIA should be to prevent risks from becoming impacts. I would argue that if an SIA practitioner expects (i.e. believes there is considerable likelihood) a project will generate an impact from a risk with a potentially severe outcome, such as an occupational health and safety incident like a worker fatality or injury, then the initiative should not proceed. However, it is common knowledge that construction sites have hazards and create occupational health and safety risks. There are well-known mitigation measures and good international industry practices so that construction can be organised and undertaken in a safe manner by reducing the harm to people. Other risks that may be recognised in an SIA are related to public health, whereby the determinants of health and well-being mean two similar individuals may respond differently to exposure from the same project activity. It is necessary for SIAs to identify mitigation and enhancement measures to manage these risks. However, for me, it does not seem appropriate to attribute significance to risks because of the large variants of uncertainty.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN MAKING THE ATTRIBUTION OF SIGNIFICANCE PROCESS ROBUST

Many sources of data, and preferably the triangulation of data, are used for categorising the magnitude and sensitivity criteria. Primary data from surveys (household, group, or settlement level), site observations, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, village meetings, as well as secondary data, are all useful sources for explaining the categorisation of magnitude and sensitivity. For magnitude criteria, the more detailed the design, the easier it is for a practitioner to analyse how the change processes will create impacts. Baseline data to establish the vulnerability of affected groups is especially important, including access to and control of resources. Intersectionality differentiations within groups of people is relevant. Golder (2019) maintains that any uncertainties associated with impact prediction or the sensitivity of the impacted groups due to the absence of data or other limitations need to be explicitly stated.

The impact assessment process can never be fully comprehensive: it is always possible to address more potential impacts, interactions, and alternatives over a wider area, for a longer time period, and/or to a greater level of detail (Lawrence, 2005). This is particularly true for baseline data collection, where more data can be presented. However, as significance attribution is a core part of the SIA process, practitioners must recognise that they are making a prediction about significance at a certain point in time, based on a specific project design,

and at a particular moment in relation to stakeholder engagement. While the prediction might be valid at the time it was made, the project design can change, and people's views and experience with impacts might change, so any prediction is never completely accurate.

Lyhne and Kornov (2013, p. 182) indicated that impact assessment practitioners need to 'acknowledge that we cannot fully control what we notice and do not notice, the words we use are never accurate, and our initial interpretations may be rigid.' SIA practitioners and project staff need to provide project information with transparency and clarity, including details on how significance is attributed. Challenges can be limited time and opportunity to understand stakeholders' perceptions (some of which may have built up over years since a project was first discussed), information shared by third parties that is different from the project description or intention, political and economic leveraging undertaken to influence various stakeholders' opinions of project activities, and even a vacuum of information about issues of interest. While good practice might indicate the relevance of stopping to allow more time to resolve these issues, there can be pressures to proceed from project sponsors, government authorities, and/or lenders that have a substantial role on determining a project's progress. Ultimately, to complete an SIA with integrity, practitioners must fairly represent the significance of the impact based on the fullness of the information known at that time of the SIA, which should aim to be sufficient, relevant, and representative. Where there are substantial uncertainties, an updated or new assessment to cover fresh findings or issues, or reassessment of significance, can be included as mitigation.

Lawrence (2013) described significance determination in impact assessment practice as making judgements about what is important, desirable, or acceptable. He presented three overarching general approaches to how this is done: (1) technical, where significance is broken down into constituent parts, and then combined using technical methods emphasising consistency, transparency, and replication by using thresholds, criteria, and decision rules; (2) collaborative, where interested and affected people jointly determine what is important, why and to what degree, emphasising participation, communication, mutual learning, and negotiation; and (3) reasoned argumentation, where judgements are supported by technical and non-technical knowledge and evidence, usually qualitative with quantitative support. I would make a connection between these three approaches and the International Association for Public Participation's Spectrum of Public Participation (IAP2, 2018). The spectrum to inform, consult, involve, collaborate, and empower depicts the way in which the public's role increasingly affects a decision. The technical approach is more focused on informing stakeholders, the reasoned approach looks at consulting and involving them, and the collaborative approach partners with stakeholders on agreeing significance.

If EIA is used to determine whether the consequences of projects are environmentally acceptable (Ehrlich & Ross, 2015), then SIA is used to determine whether the consequences are socially acceptable, not just for the project promoters but also for the local stakeholders and those who will be most impacted. Tagliani and Walter (2018) discussed how acceptance of the project can differ between locations (for instance local versus national versus international), and between times (a project that induces seasonal influx may be perceived differently at certain times of the year). Public consultations are events that confirm whether local stakeholders agree with the SIA findings, including the identification, significance attribution, and management measures of social impacts at a specific point in time. Similarly, the issuing of a permit will confirm that regulators, often with conditions, agree with the same information.

Ongoing community engagement is needed to understand when stakeholders believe additional assessment and management measures are required for new or changing social impacts.

CONCLUSION

Attributing significance occurs twice in the SIA process, without and then with mitigation, enhancement, and monitoring measures. Magnitude and sensitivity criteria to characterise the impact and the impacted groups are combined for attributing significance. In an earlier publication (Rowan, 2009), using concepts from environmental impact assessment, I linked magnitude criteria to wellbeing, and sensitivity criteria to vulnerability to create a means of putting people at the centre of SIA. With the inclusion of resilience, this has largely become commonplace for SIA practitioners. The need now is to continue making SIA more robust, including by clearly explaining how the categorisation of magnitude and sensitivity are assessed for the significance result. This would lead to better comprehension of social impacts by a range of stakeholders, including those who are affected by the project and the most vulnerable.

Various sources of information contribute to the categorisation of magnitude and sensitivity criteria, and there can be differences of opinion. The labels used, for example ‘major’, ‘moderate’, and ‘minor’, are important for discussion and understanding. The categorisations of magnitude and sensitivity criteria inform where budget, staff resources, and monitoring efforts should be focused. While non-significant impacts still require management measures, impacts with a higher significance categorisation require more attention and management. When stakeholders understand why an impact is presented as significant, they can then understand the project and its activities better. And with that understanding, the impacts can be better managed leading to improved social outcomes. Comprehension of and acting on the significance attribution are both critical for effective meaningful engagement, broad community support, and the ultimate success of the project.

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37. Monitoring for the adaptive management of social impacts

Nigel Rossouw and Liza van der Merwe

INTRODUCTION

Historically and to the present, Social Impact Assessment (SIA) has had a subordinate relationship to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) (Burdge, 2002; Hildebrandt & Sandham, 2014; Vanclay, 2020). Consequently, social impacts and the conducting of SIA have not had the same amount of attention as environmental impacts and EIA, which are commonly managed by using environmental management plans and systems (Franks & Vanclay, 2013). However, there has been an increasing focus on the ongoing monitoring, mitigation and management of social impacts, but the study of social monitoring is still in its infancy (Rossouw & Malan, 2007). This chapter conceptualises ‘social impact monitoring’ as being a process of monitoring the social change processes and social impacts that are identified in the initial SIA and throughout the project lifecycle. Project social impact monitoring is an extension of the SIA process from the pre-consent decision-making stage (where SIA is undertaken) to post-consent stages (especially project implementation, where SIA mitigation, monitoring and management actions are implemented). In this chapter, ‘project’ refers to large physical footprint developments (such as infrastructure, civil works, agriculture, agroforestry, renewables, mining, oil and gas, etc.) in any part of its lifecycle, including design, construction, development, operation, maintenance, expansion, rehabilitation and decommissioning/closure.

Monitoring is the systematic process for the regular measurement, collection, recording and analysis of data relating to the inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts of projects (World Bank, 2004; Glasson et al., 2005). The existence of a monitoring system is essential for evaluation, which is the process of determining the efficacy and efficiency of the design and implementation of projects and the sustainability of results (FORMIN, 2006; ILO, 2015; OECD, 2021). While monitoring and evaluation are synergistic (World Bank, 2004), this chapter focuses exclusively on monitoring.

The chapter starts by making the case that a clear ontological and epistemological approach provides an interpretive lens to understanding social impact monitoring. Attention is then given to the development of an iterative and adaptive social impact management framework that serves as a foundation for producing a Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP).

FRAMING SOCIAL IMPACT MONITORING

Ontological and Epistemological Lenses

Before initiating the design of a social impact monitoring programme, it is wise to first consider the ontological and epistemological perspectives that are to define the monitoring

approach, data analysis and interpretation. The choice of data collection techniques should only be made after there is a clear understanding and perspective of the ontological and epistemological stance, theory and approach to be used (Gray, 2014). Ontology probes the form and nature of reality, while epistemology is about how we create knowledge of social reality, and stresses the relationship between practitioner and project-affected people (Aledo-Tur & Domínguez-Gomez, 2017).

Project proponents typically want social impact monitoring to be an objective, normative method (i.e., top-down focus), and for social impacts to be quantitatively measured and monitored (i.e., the technocratic paradigm) (Aledo-Tur & Domínguez-Gomez, 2017). This objectivist view is problematic because social impact monitoring also needs to be participatory and contextual, and should highlight intangible concepts such as values, culture, spiritual dimensions, behaviour, power dynamics, perceptions, wellbeing and community cohesion (Parsons, 2020). A constructivist paradigm recognises multiple value systems and accepts socially constructed reality (Aledo-Tur & Domínguez-Gomez, 2017). Ontology and epistemology can be thought of as lenses through which the social world, social processes, social impacts, social activities, human behaviour and knowledge are viewed.

Theory: Revealing the Iceberg of Social Impacts

It is only through the use of social theory that SIA practitioners will know what to ask and what data to collect (Howitt, 2011). Making sense of observations and interpreting data about project-induced social change processes and social impacts (Vanclay, 2002) implicitly rests on the theoretical and epistemological frames of reference held by the practitioner (Rossouw & Malan, 2007). There is no single perfect or consolidated theory or model to be applied to social impact monitoring. Complexity theory, systems theory, resilience theory and adaptation theory (all discussed below) offer insights and serve as useful guides for monitoring dynamic social systems, which are influenced by policy, power, politics and participation (see Figure 37.1). These theories and meta-themes assist practitioners to delve beneath the surface of observable events to reveal the patterns of behaviour, ways of thinking, values and knowledge systems that are uncovered by qualitative discovery.

Practitioners apply theoretical frames of reference to social impact monitoring whether or not they explicitly state or are fully aware of their theoretical approach. A theoretical framework provides an interpretation model for visible and invisible aspects of social changes and social impacts. Without a theoretical framework, monitoring tends to focus on visible observable events, and invisible below-the-surface elements (such as values, beliefs, attitudes, culture, expectations, etc.) are hidden and not within the monitoring frame of reference. Without monitoring having an explicit guiding theory, it would only be seeing the ‘tip of the iceberg’, with deeper or underlying social elements that drive social dynamics being hidden from view.

Complexity Theory

Complexity theory has emerged as a way to counter reductionism and to explain the behaviour of whole systems rather than just the constituent parts. Social systems are more complex than ecological systems because they are comprised of human beings who are imbued with agency and who interact with the system, which makes social systems stochastic and complex, as well as responding and adapting to stimuli internal and external to the system boundary (Holling,



Source: The authors.

Figure 37.1 Application of a multi-theory approach to social impact monitoring

2001; Mitchell, 2009). Complexity theory is of particular relevance to social impact monitoring in that the concepts of interaction (between individuals), self-organisation, emergence and adaptation are useful as explanatory and interpretive tools.

Systems Theory

The real world is based around systems; however, SIA and social impact monitoring typically focus on individual components. Even if somewhat convenient, the deconstruction of real-world systems into siloed parts is artificial and ineffective in predicting, monitoring and managing the real impacts of projects on people and the environments surrounding projects (Ehrlich, 2022). Whole systems are made up of parts that fit together in an interacting, connecting network of social agents that are bound together and influenced by agent characteristics, ties between agents, feedback loops between individual social agents, and institutional rules (Ostrom, 2009; Koliba et al., 2016). When looking at social systems for social impact monitoring of projects, it is important to look at the context of the larger social system rather than simply focus only on the detail of any particular piece of data. Systems thinking helps to move the focus away from observing singular events or data to identifying patterns of behaviour over time, especially in situations where the focus is on discovering the systemic structures driving the events and patterns of behaviour and uncovering people’s mental models

about them (Senge, 1990). Systems thinking provides a framework for understanding the wider context of social issues and inquiring how stakeholders experience things, especially given their interconnectedness and interdependencies (Turner & Baker, 2019).

Resilience Theory

Resilience thinking provides a promising epistemological tool to conceptualise change, with resilience being understood as the social processes that local communities put into action to collectively learn from negative social impacts and to transform towards empowering local capacities, mitigating impacts and enhancing wellbeing (Imperiale & Vanclay, 2016, 2021). In resilience science, a social community and the natural ecosystems they use are collectively called a ‘socio-ecological system’ (Folke, 2006). Promoting social resilience means finding ways to combine various factors, influences, values, social capital and human agency to shape social action to achieve a positive trajectory of functioning and adaptation (Lerch, 2015; Imperiale & Vanclay, 2016, 2021).

Adaptation Theory

Adaptation can be described as the process of adjustment to actual or expected changes and their effects in order to reduce harm and vulnerability and/or to exploit potential benefits and build adaptive capacity (CARE, 2014). Adaptation refers to human actions that innovate or improve development into new pathways, even completely novel ones (Folke et al., 2010). It recombines experience and knowledge, promotes learning, turning change into windows of opportunity for innovative pathways (Westley et al., 2011; Imperiale & Vanclay, 2021). Adaptation is related to agency and is about the capacity of individuals, households and communities to manage change (Smit & Wandel, 2006). The implication of Adaptation Theory for social impact monitoring is that, to empower people as a transformative adaptive response to cope with change and impacts, monitoring should explicitly consider community priorities, needs, knowledge and capacities.

Meta-Theme: Policy

The meta policy approach seeks to understand how policy-making works and explores the context and complexity of decision-making processes. There are numerous policy theories and models (such as rational comprehensive, incremental, mixed scanning, social interaction, advocacy coalition framework, etc.) that illustrate the multiple dimensions of decision-making and the interactions of actors in policy-making (Gupta, 2001; Fischer et al., 2015; Peters, 2015). Policy instruments can be: legal (laws that compel people and organisations to do things); financial (allocating funds to encourage and penalise organisations and people); organisational (applying bureaucratic power to solve problems); or personal (persuading others to achieve goals) (De Coning & Cloete, 2000). EIA and SIA practitioners should have a good understanding of policy-making (Kørnøv & Thissen, 2000; Nitz & Brown, 2001; Rossouw & Wiseman, 2004). Social impact monitoring is, in effect, a policy instrument, and practitioners need to understand where it fits into the overall project decision-making process. Understanding the theory and process of policy provides insight into the nature of project decision-making and how it can be influenced. The value of policy theory models for social

impact monitoring is that they provide insights into the dynamic agendas and behaviours of project actors and decision-makers.

Meta-Theme: Power

The concept of power cannot be mentioned without reflecting on the writings of Michel Foucault, whose thinking has had far-reaching influence. Foucault (1980, p. 52) stated that ‘it is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power.’ Knowledge is a product of shared meanings, conventions and social practices. The control of knowledge is a way to exercise power. Most of the literature on power focuses on its negative, destructive, manipulative and competitive side, while power can also be used, shared or created by actors and their networks for positive action (Gaventa, 2006).

Within the field of impact assessment, few authors have critically considered the concept of power, even though EIA and SIA are inescapably and fundamentally concerned with power (Howitt, 2011; Cashmore & Richardson, 2013; Ijabadeniyi & Vanclay, 2020). EIA processes influence social responses to projects by their engagement practices, the content of EIA reports, and by the philosophical arguments embedded within the knowledge construction process. People’s opinions can be shaped by the exercise of power, for example in conforming to the desires of the powerful (Lukes, 1974). SIA and social impact monitoring should help those planning and implementing projects to understand the relevant formal and informal power structures and rules. This points to the need for practitioners to become aware of how power relations shape social impact monitoring processes, how knowledge is used as a tool of power, and how monitoring processes influence and stimulate discourses and interests.

Meta-Theme: Politics

Historically, there have been calls by various authors (Friesema & Culhane, 1976; Formby, 1990; Burdge & Vanclay, 1996) for politics to be included in EIA and SIA and to recognise the key role of politics in decision-making, but these considerations remain largely absent in EIA and SIA processes and reports (Kemp, 2011; Baker & Westman, 2018). Mottee et al. (2020) highlighted how politics can be used to ignore or obscure social issues. Communities often find that they need to mobilise and influence politics to achieve respect for their rights and to influence the decision-making processes affecting their lives (Hanna et al., 2016). The implication for practitioners is to realise that, without integrating political assessment and influencing politics, a positivist approach to SIA and social impact monitoring does not guarantee an adequate and fair consideration of social issues in project decision-making.

Meta-Theme: Participation

Participation is a multi-dimensional concept, with different levels of participation often distinguished. Participation is a basic human right, and access to information, decision-making and justice allows society to utilise the full potential of all (Kemp & Vanclay, 2013; Götzmann et al., 2016; also see Chapter 20). Various authors (e.g., Arnstein, 1969; White, 1996; IAP2, 2018) have developed typologies that categorise the different forms and methods of participation into the levels of involvement, decision and power. The implications of this for practitioners when designing social impact monitoring processes are that: they should provide

for meaningful access to information; ensure participation in decisions that affect people's livelihoods; and promote access to redress and remedy.

USING THEORY OF CHANGE AND THEORY OF SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE TO IMPLEMENT SOCIAL IMPACT MONITORING

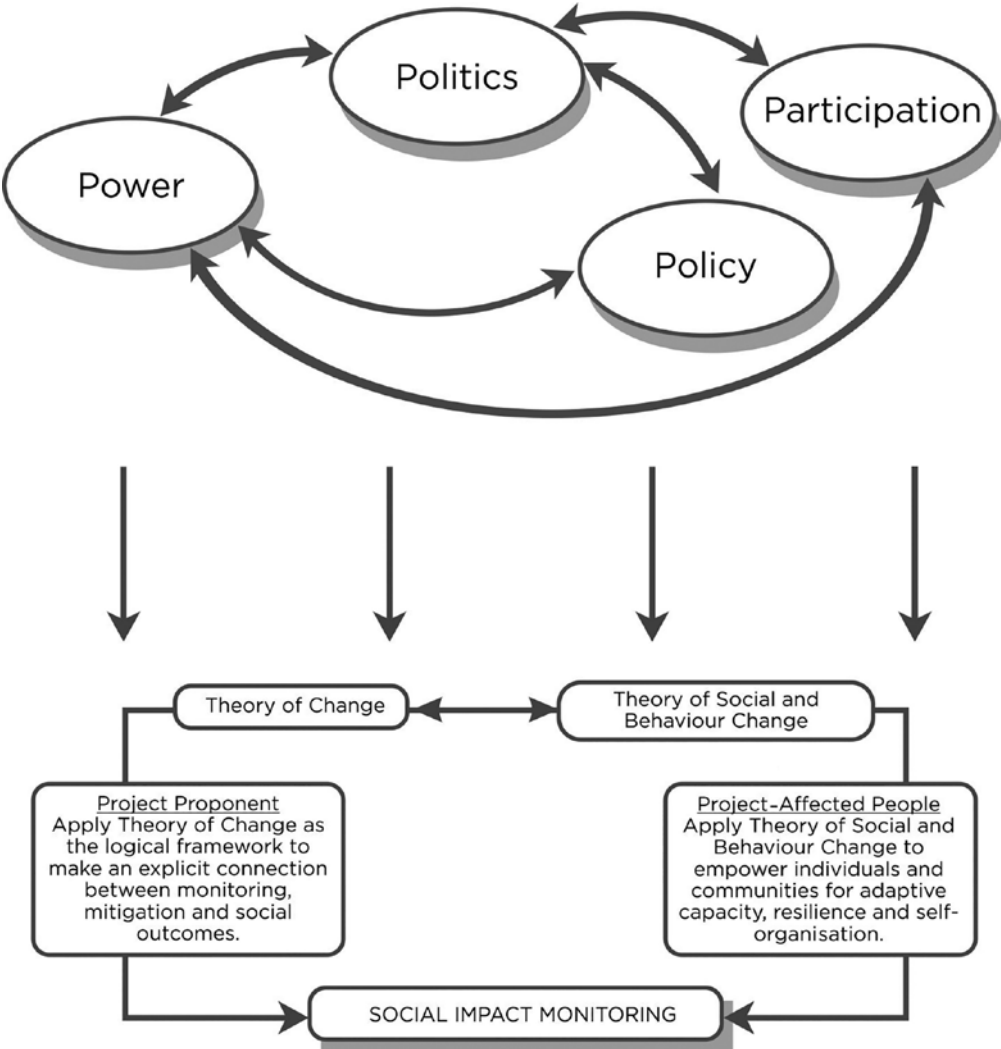
'Theory of Change' is an outcomes-based framework that focuses on long-term impacts and explains how and why activities of an initiative (e.g., projects) generate desired changes (Vanclay, 2015). 'Theory of Social and Behaviour Change' provides a framework to understand specific behaviours and their underlying influencing factors in order to achieve positive project outcomes (USAID, 2019). These concepts are synergistic and complementary. The Theory of Change and the Theory of Social and Behaviour Change together provide a guiding approach for management plans to identify the social and behavioural interventions for project-affected people that are critical for individual, household and community adaptation and resilience (see Figure 37.2).

Theory of Change

Theory of Change is widely used by development organisations and is seen as best practice in development project design and implementation (Mason & Barnes, 2007; Vogel, 2012; Davies, 2018). Theory of Change is a comprehensive descriptive and diagrammatic illustration of a social change initiative that is a basis for planning, ongoing decision-making, monitoring and evaluation (Maughan, 2012). Integrating a Theory of Change approach into social impact monitoring allows the implementation logic to be developed and made explicit, providing rigour for social change initiatives. In a 'pathway of change map', the Theory of Change graphically depicts the complex web of cause-and-effect relationships and describes the sequence by which interventions are intended to bring about change (Maughan, 2012; Vanclay, 2015). The implications for social impact monitoring practitioners are that use of the Theory of Change encourages a project team to explain to stakeholders how mitigation and enhancement measures will achieve the desired goals, and the processes by which changes and positive impacts will occur.

Theory of Social and Behaviour Change

The various theories of social and behaviour change focus on the determinants (influencing factors) and barriers (obstacles) to determining and implementing ways of influencing how people behave (e.g., Darnton, 2008a, 2008b; DEFRA, 2008; World Bank, 2015; Schmied, 2017, 2019; Petit, 2019; Petit & Zalk, 2019). Social and behaviour change is the application of theory-based approaches to identify opportunities to change behaviour at the individual, community and/or societal levels. Social and behaviour change interventions employ a range of strategies (e.g., interpersonal communication, advocacy, social mobilisation, structural or environmental interventions) at different levels (e.g., individual, household and community) to empower, motivate and strengthen the capability of target groups to improve their livelihoods, adapt to change, and increase overall resilience (World Bank, 2015; USAID, 2019). Analysing



Source: The authors.

Figure 37.2 Theory of Change and Theory of Social and Behaviour Change can function as the implementation strategies for social impact monitoring

behaviours during the SIA stage and monitoring this variable during the project lifecycle and the contexts in which they occur is essential for developing effective evidence-based social mitigation measures. Monitoring is not the passive measurement of pre-determined variables identified in the SIA. It should incorporate inductive analysis and observation of social and behaviour change related to the project that have not been predicted.

BUILDING MONITORING INTO THE SOCIAL IMPACT MANAGEMENT PLAN

Designing a Management Plan

While theory provides interpretive lenses to understand monitoring, social impact management provides the planning process for determining the spatial and temporal scope for monitoring. Social impact management consists of a number of iterative steps, which includes the design and implementation of a SIMP. A SIMP provides a framework and plan for the ongoing processes of assessment, management, mitigation, monitoring and auditing of social impacts (Franks & Vanclay, 2013). Ideally, the first version of the SIMP should be produced as part of the SIA. SIMPs should be updated before each new stage in the project lifecycle, or if there are new developments or significant changes in the social context or project. This need for updating SIMPs requires that the SIMP design and implementation process be iterative, and that each step can be revisited to determine how integration, analysis and tools can be adapted to suit changing social or project circumstances. Within this iterative, adaptive management planning process, the SIMP is a dynamic document (Figure 37.3).

Step 1: Integrate Social Impact Monitoring into a Management System

- Design social impact monitoring and management activities into the project/company management system
- Develop SIMP as part of the package of plans for project implementation
- Integrate social impact monitoring as part of the 'checking' stage in the management system

Step 2: Map Social Change Processes and Social Impacts

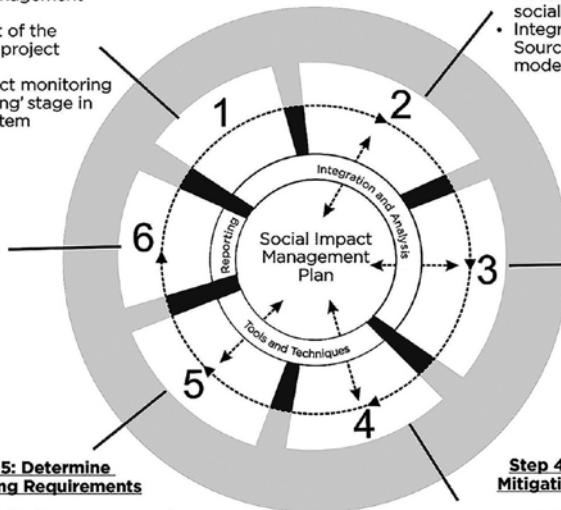
- Develop network map illustrating social change processes
- Integrate network map into Source-Pathway-Receptor mental model

Step 6: SIMP Report Content

- Activities
- Aspects
- Objectives
- Indicators
- Targets
- Mitigation

Step 3: Determine Social Area of Influence

- Direct impacts
- Indirect and induced impacts
- Cumulative impacts



Step 5: Determine Monitoring Requirements

- Determine monitoring purpose and objectives
- Determine methods and techniques for data gathering

Step 4: Apply the Mitigation Hierarchy

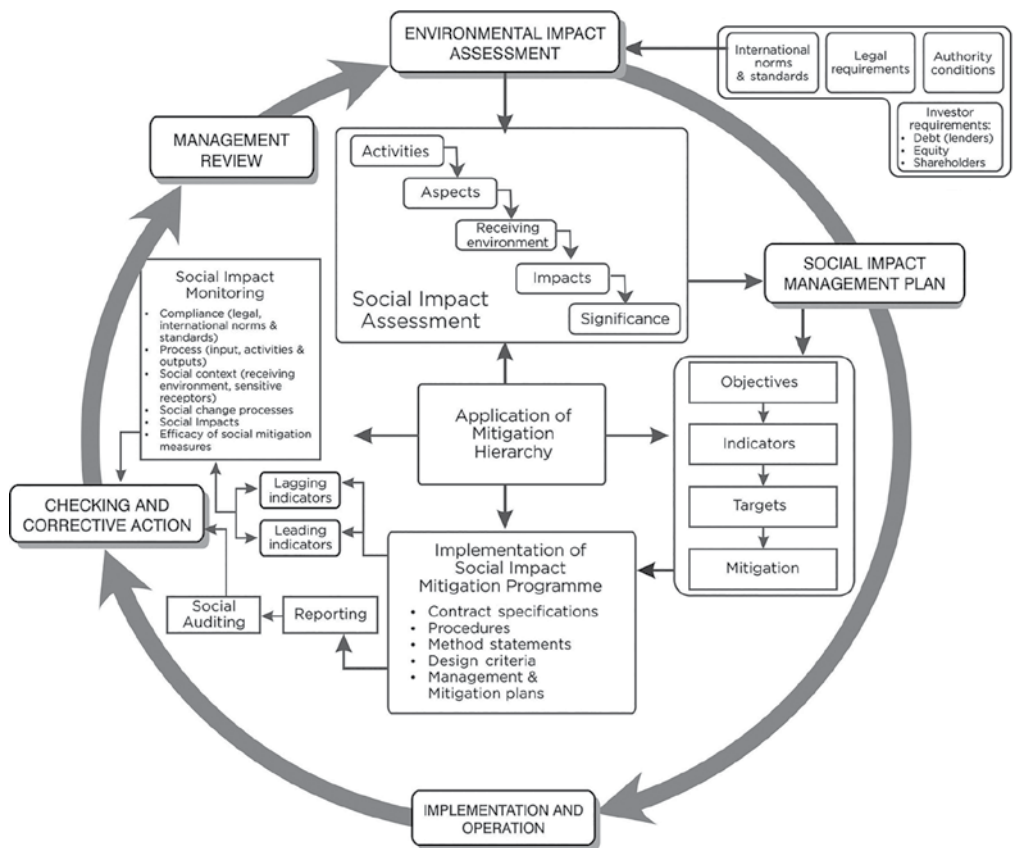
- Sequentially apply mitigation options in order of preference, starting with avoidance, then minimise, restore/rehabilitate, compensate and lastly offsets

Source: The authors.

Figure 37.3 A stepwise and iterative social impact management framework

Step 1: Integrate Social Impact Monitoring into the Management System

Ongoing management and proactively responding to social impacts during project implementation and throughout the project lifecycle requires that the monitoring of social issues be embedded in the company’s and/or project’s management system. The management system could be the ISO 31000 Risk Management Standard or the ISO 14001 Environmental Management System, or similar. This inclusion ensures that the analysis, monitoring and management of social impacts form part of the project’s decision-making processes. Adaptive management should be built into the design of the SIMP, with monitoring and management being conceptualised as a dynamic cyclical system that requires a learning and improvement function as a feedback loop. Adaptive processes require upfront systematic assessment (in the form of SIA), a management plan, social impact mitigation programmes, checking (in the form of social auditing), corrective action and management review (see Figure 37.4).



Source: The authors.

Figure 37.4 Social impact monitoring needs to be integrated into an adaptive management system

Step 2: Map Social Change Processes and Social Impacts

In practice, social change processes and social impacts are typically communicated in tabular form or as structured text in SIMPs. However, there is value in visually communicating to stakeholders the complex interconnected character of social change processes and social impacts as a mental model or network diagram (Vanclay et al., 2015). Network maps of social change processes and social impacts can be produced either by the SIA practitioner, or as a participatory mapping exercise by local communities impacted by a project (Brown & Kytta, 2018). The key lesson to be learned here is that social change processes are dynamic, interactive, non-linear and generally uncertain. Producing network maps as a participatory exercise facilitates intensive knowledge exchange, provides social context cues, ensures collaborative sense-making, and helps in establishing relationships rich with emotional connection and trust-building (Conklin, 2006; Brown & Kytta, 2018; de Moor, 2018).

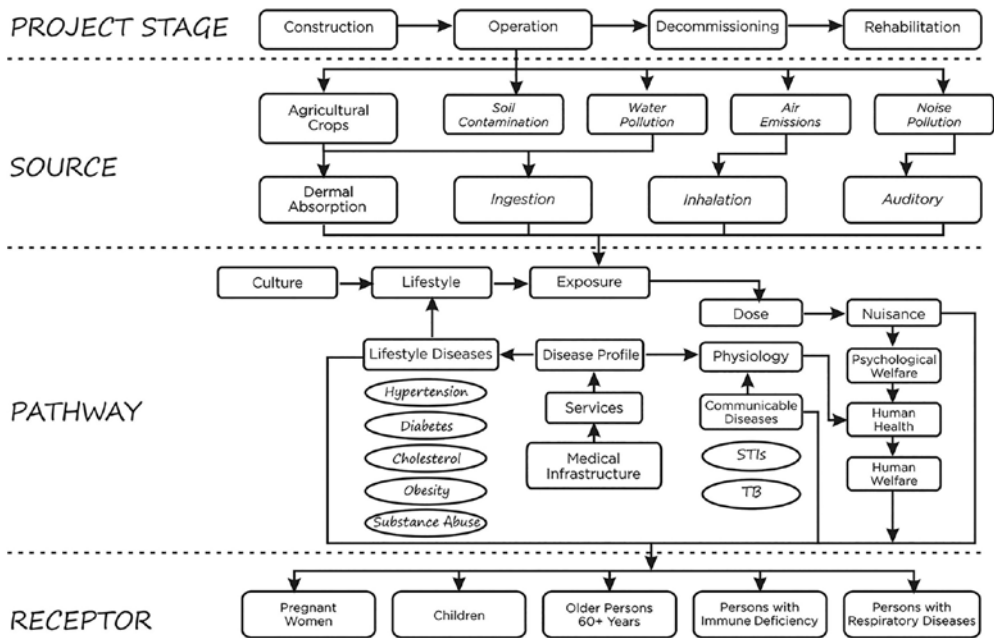
One method of interpreting and characterising environmental and social impacts is the Source-Pathway-Receptor (SPR) model. The SPR model is widely applied in risk assessments, eco-toxicology, air pollution, human health risk assessments and groundwater contamination. However, the SPR model is not typically used in SIA, but could be usefully applied to social impact monitoring. The SPR model would be of benefit to social impact monitoring in that it provides a useful means to identify and visually represent the apportionment of monitoring indicators, and ultimately can analyse where mitigation measures should be implemented (e.g., at source, pathways and/or receptors). Figure 37.5 provides an illustration of the application of the SPR model at the operations stage of a project. The SPR model illustrates the impact route from the source of social risk, to social change pathways, and then ultimately to the groups most vulnerable to negative social impacts. The information in the SPR model would need to be adapted for the different risk sources and impact pathways evident for the different stages in the project lifecycle.

Step 3: Determine the Social Areas of Influence

The geographical extent of the social influence of project activities on the social environment will vary from project to project, and over the course of each project. In EIA, the area affected by a project is typically termed the ‘area of influence’, or sometimes the ‘zone of influence’, and is usually established by the imposition of spatial zones within some fixed distance from the project site. However, with social impacts and SIA, there can be multiple sites that generate impacts and it is necessary to be aware that these areas of influence will not necessarily be contiguous with the project site. A general description of the term ‘area of influence’ is provided by the International Finance Corporation in Performance Standard 1 (IFC, 2012, clause 8). Figure 37.6 provides a highly simplified illustration of how this area might be considered from a social perspective.

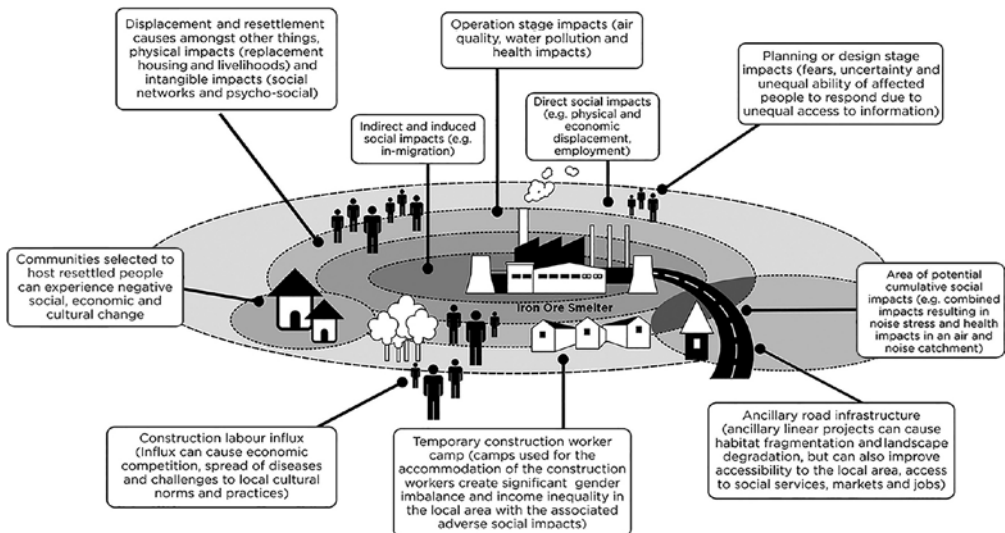
Step 4: Apply the Mitigation Hierarchy

The Mitigation Hierarchy is well-established in EIA (João et al., 2011), but it is not widely applied as a concept in SIA and social impact monitoring. The Mitigation Hierarchy is widely regarded as a good practice approach to managing risks (IFC, 2012). Although the Mitigation Hierarchy literature tends to focus on biodiversity, the Mitigation Hierarchy provides a val-



Source: The authors.

Figure 37.5 Example of the application of the Source-Pathway-Receptor model for the operation stage of a project



Source: The authors.

Figure 37.6 Conceptual illustration of some of the multiple social areas of influence

uable organising framework for the design, communication and implementation of social mitigation measures. The Mitigation Hierarchy sets out a risk-based, tiered, sequential and iterative approach for prioritising mitigation, starting with avoidance, and finally considering compensation and offsets as last resorts. To improve project design and positive outcomes for communities, enhancement should be considered at all stages (João et al., 2011).

Step 5: Establish Monitoring Requirements

A key challenge is to identify which monitoring tools should be included in a SIMP to identify the data trends in social change processes and social impacts. In complex projects and social environments, practitioners should ‘mix and match’ monitoring tools to address the different quantitative and qualitative indicators for social change processes and social impacts. Practitioners need to look beyond their narrow field of training to investigate the wide variety of tools from other disciplines for determining appropriate social impact monitoring methods. For example, the monitoring and evaluation field (IFRC, 2002; UNDP, 2009) provides a rich source of information for selecting monitoring tools for different monitoring objectives. Table 37.1 provides an overview of the different social impact monitoring types and their associated monitoring objectives.

Step 6: Develop the Content Listing for the SIMP Report

SIMPs are usually developed as an output of SIAs and have emerged as a new tool for implementing SIA and integrating it into a company’s management system to understand and respond to social impacts (Franks & Vanclay, 2013; Vanclay et al., 2015). SIMPs are the link between SIA and the implementation of mitigation (see Figure 37.4). The level of detail and comprehensiveness of the SIMP will vary depending on the scale of the project and the complexity of the likely social change processes. The content of a SIMP may include the following components:

- Project activities
- Performance objectives
- Indicators (leading and lagging)
- Targets
- Mitigation options
- Responsibilities
- Timing
- Monitoring and record-keeping requirements.

TOOLS FOR SOCIAL IMPACT MONITORING

There are many social research methods and tools that social impact monitoring can use (IFRC, 2002; Mack et al., 2005; Alasuutari et al., 2008). The choice of tools should be made after a clear understanding is gained of what theories, approaches and methodological framework are to be applied. The selection of social impact monitoring tools should be driven by a question, problem, impact or indicator in search of a tool rather than the reverse. There is

Table 37.1 *Purpose and objectives for the different types of social impact monitoring*

Monitoring type	Purpose and objectives
Social Baseline Monitoring	A baseline monitoring survey collects qualitative and quantitative data to analyse and describe the social environment prior to construction so that change over time can be assessed. The baseline provides the basis for monitoring and evaluation, with a follow-up study at a later point (typically at mid-term or completion of the project) to facilitate measurement of social change processes and social impacts.
Social Impact Monitoring	This monitoring should occur throughout the project lifecycle. Impact monitoring measures complex elements/variables within the social change pathway and considers to what extent social changes can be attributed to project activities. Social impact monitoring measures the social changes (positive and negative) for individuals, families and communities that result from project activities. Social impact monitoring creates a feedback loop by including routine assessments, such as review of documentation, measurement of indicators and tracking of social changes of the project-affected people. As social impact monitoring activities are done routinely throughout the project, data collection and analysis may reveal early challenges. This allows project developers and practitioners to alter project activities and improve the chances of positive outcomes from the project.
Resettlement Monitoring	This monitoring focuses on the number and location of displaced/resettled persons to measure the progress with physical resettlement and the delivery of entitlements.
Social Compliance Monitoring	This monitoring is used to check that the management actions and mitigation measures specified in the SIMP are being implemented. The monitoring assesses whether the project is compliant with local laws, international norms and standards and guidelines specified in the SIA and SIMP. This monitoring should make provision for remedial action to be implemented in the event of non-compliance.
Social Impact Pre-Closure Monitoring	This monitoring starts just prior to the cessation of construction activities or project closure after cessation of operational activities. Monitoring assesses performance against closure criteria, such as verifying whether the positive social impacts and outcomes have been achieved. The relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and success of mitigation and enhancement measures are assessed and corrective action taken.
Social Impact Post-Closure Monitoring	This monitoring occurs for a defined period of time after cessation of operational activities. Monitoring techniques employed may include longitudinal studies, which use continuous or periodic repeated observations of individuals, families and communities over prolonged periods of time.
Social Impact Follow-Up Monitoring	Follow-up is specifically about monitoring the actual social impacts of a project to compare it with the SIA predictions and policy objectives used to frame project approvals. This knowledge can be utilised by regulators and proponents to improve future EIAs/SIAs. Social impact follow-up monitoring measures whether social impacts identified by the SIA materialised and are within the predicted range and level of significance. This monitoring also measures whether specified social performance targets were achieved and whether management commitments were kept.

Source: The authors.

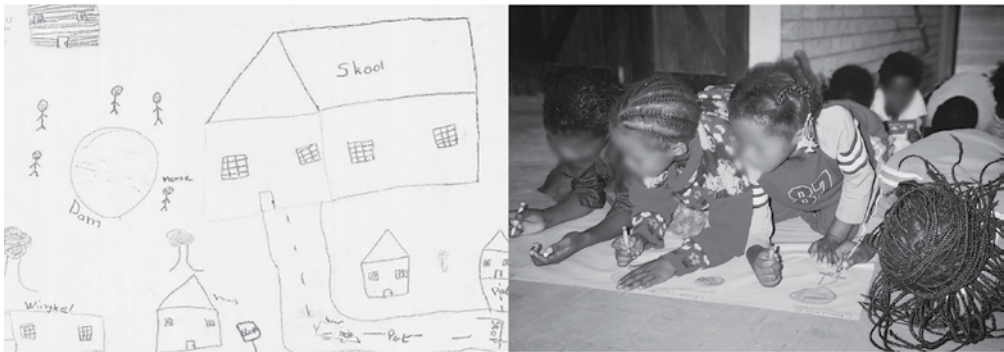
no single tool or perfect combination of tools to be applied, and each practitioner will need to make informed decisions about what is best in each particular context. The use of mixed methods is encouraged, especially with a stronger emphasis on qualitative approaches (Taylor et al., 2021). Examples of some useful tools are provided below to demonstrate the value of qualitative social impact monitoring tools.

The methodological choices we make about social impact monitoring processes are also ethical choices that should be discrimination-sensitive and guided by ethical principles such

as respect for monitoring participants (i.e., project-affected people) and informed consent (see Vanclay et al., 2013). When deciding about what data to collect and the choice of tools, the benefits of possessing social data against the potential risks for informants should be weighed. The application of tools for social impact monitoring also needs to consider human rights, social justice and the promotion of gender-inclusivity, and be culturally appropriate.

Community Mapping: Highlighting Children's Perceptions of Social Change

The voices of children and how they experience social change are often absent in social impact monitoring. One way of including the perceptions and experiences of children into social impact monitoring is community mapping, which is a qualitative phenomenological tool for visually recording lived experience and is recognised as a valid means to illustrate social change (Chambers, 1994; Tisdall, 2017; Cochrane & Corbett, 2018). Figure 37.7 illustrates the community mapping that was used as part of social impact monitoring for the Berg River Dam project in South Africa. The maps drawn by children of the project-affected people provided a fuller picture of community social realities and illustrated that the dam influenced the frame of reference and immediate world experience of the children (Haas et al., 2010).



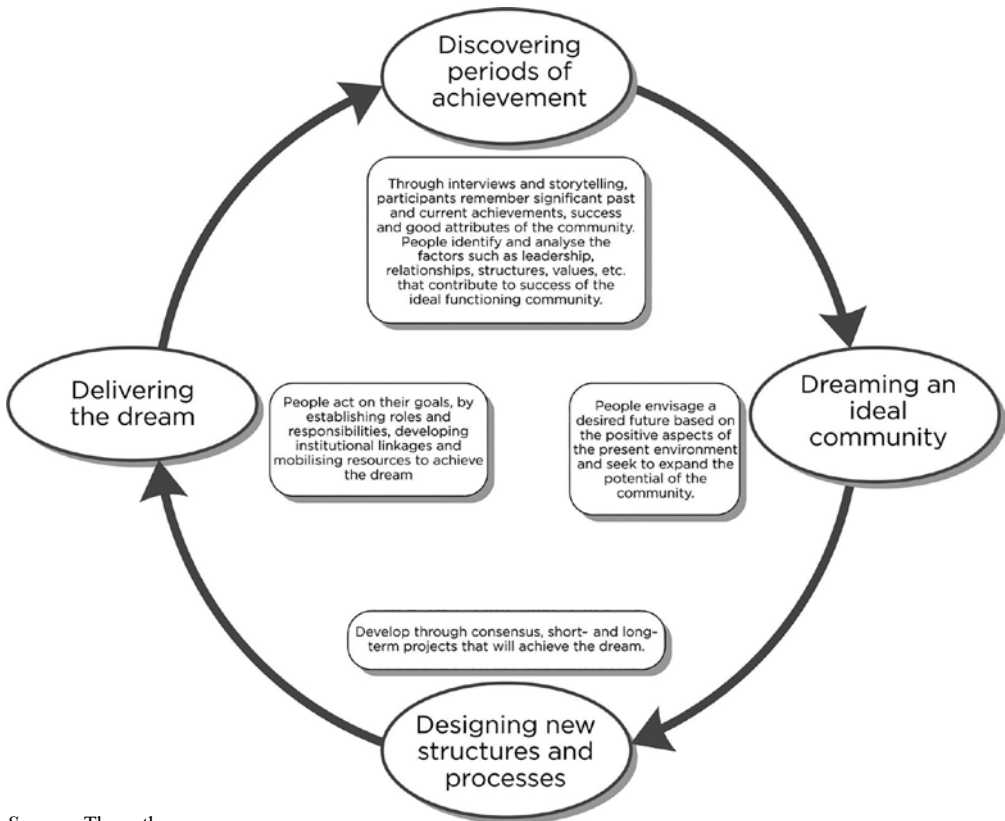
Source: The authors.

Figure 37.7 Involving children using the community mapping tool as part of social impact monitoring for the Berg River Dam in Franschhoek, South Africa

Appreciative Inquiry: Promoting Self-Organisation and Agency

Social impact monitoring processes are typically based on problem identification and problem solving (mitigation) for and on behalf of project-affected people. Appreciative Inquiry offers an affirmative participatory approach to societal change that is distinct from problem-based approaches (Watkins & Mohr, 2001; Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003). It is a participative discovery process that uses: (1) grounded observation to identify the best of what is; (2) vision and logic to identify ideals of what might be; (3) collaborative dialogue and choice to achieve

consent about what should be; and (4) collective experimentation to discover what can be (Bushe, 2011). Appreciative Inquiry was used as one of the tools for social impact monitoring of the Berg River Dam in Franschhoek, South Africa (Rossouw & Malan, 2007; Haas et al., 2010). The aim was to transform the culture of the community from one that saw itself in largely negative terms to one with an appreciative sense of itself. Project-affected people were allowed to dream and discover how they could leverage the project enhancement measures to create a more self-sufficient and resilient community (Figure 37.8).



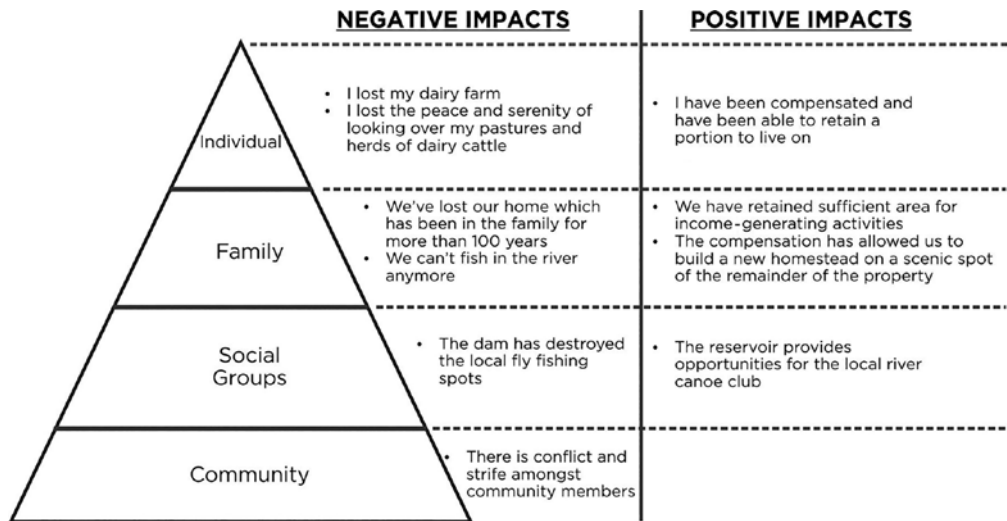
Source: The authors.

Figure 37.8 *Illustration of the Appreciative Inquiry process that was initiated as part of social impact monitoring for the Berg River Dam in Franschhoek, South Africa*

Storytelling: How Analysing Narratives Contributed to Understanding Change in Sense of Place

Storytelling has enormous value as a qualitative data-gathering tool in social impact monitoring (Dahlstrom, 2014; Vanclay, 2015; van Wessel, 2018). Storytelling can be used to gather information, provide insight and reframe evidence. Ottinger (2017) argued that practitioners and communities need to work together to reshape monitoring plans to incorporate data that

reflect individual, family and community acts, feelings, lives, ideas, beliefs, and their everyday lives. By listening to and documenting stories, we can develop an understanding of the full meaning of these stories and their influence on shaping people’s perceptions of social change. Using the concept of ‘sense of place’, we collected stories from landowners who were affected by the construction of the Spring Grove Dam in Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa, to document their personal stories and understand how they experienced change. By analysing these stories and drawing out the main points (i.e., narrative inquiry), it is possible to categorise the positive and negative impacts at multiple scales (see Figure 37.9).



Source: The authors.

Figure 37.9 Categorising verbatim statements from landowners to build a single narrative assessment story

CONCLUSION

Social impact monitoring is important because it monitors the social change processes triggered by the planning, implementation and operation of projects and verifies the prediction and significance of social impacts. Having a theoretically informed approach to social impact monitoring provides an interpretation model for both visible and invisible aspects of social changes and social impacts. While theory provides interpretive lenses to understand monitoring, social impact management provides the method for determining the spatial and temporal scope for monitoring. As social changes are uncertain non-linear dynamic challenges, adaptively responding to social impacts throughout the project lifecycle requires that the monitoring of social issues be embedded in the company’s and/or project’s risk and environmental management systems. Ongoing social impact management is achieved within an iterative and adaptive management plan called a SIMP. The tools for social impact monitoring that are specified in the SIMP should be selected after establishing what theories, approaches and methodological framework are to be applied. The use of a mixture of tools is encouraged, especially with an emphasis on qualitative methods and approaches.

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