

Session 11.

Cumulative Impact Assessment

Technical presentation and dialogue

Summary

USAID has established mandatory environmental procedures to limit adverse impacts of Agency activities on ecosystems, environmental resources, and environmental quality. Through adoption of an EIA methodology, USAID environmental procedures promote ESDM and better development outcomes. While the impact(s) of any given USAID activity may be small in absolute terms, numerous activities occurring in a single region or environment may have significant cumulative impacts. Thus, §216.6(d) requires the assessment of the environmental effects of both individual actions and their cumulative environmental impacts in a given country or geographic area.

Cumulative impact (per CEQ 40 CFR § 1508.7) is defined as:

the impact on the environment, which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.

Cumulative impact assessment is an essential part of the environmental assessment process. This session will develop an understanding of cumulative impact assessment and how it is applied to USAID-funded activities. It will focus on developing skills to identify when and how to evaluate cumulative impacts via a presentation of the fundamentals and interactive examples.

Objectives

Achieve a common understanding of the basic elements of cumulative impact assessment

- (1) Understand what cumulative impact assessment is and how it differs from direct and indirect impacts.
- (2) Understand the legislative background of cumulative impact assessment.
- (3) Work through identification of potential cumulative impacts via interactive examples of real-world projects.