

Sessions 4 and 5.

Practicing Fundamental EIA Skills: Virtual Field Visit

Objectives

Practice information-gathering and observation skills needed to identify impacts/issues of concern

Summary

The previous session presented the basic theory of baseline characterization, impact evaluation, mitigation, and monitoring. This session practices these skills via a “virtual field visit” to Burma. By using sector guidance from the *Small-Scale Guidelines* as a key resource, the session also builds familiarity with the *Guidelines*.

Instructions

In this session, we undertake a virtual field visit to practice the fundamental EIA skills of identifying relevant baseline conditions, and identifying potential impacts of concern.

We will visit a program whose activities have been in operation for some time. USAID-funded agricultural expansion activities are planned in this case.

In this visit, we play the role of a mission sector team, evaluating the proposed expansion of an existing agricultural project. We undertake the visit to improve our understanding of the current baseline conditions and to allow us to better understand the environmental issues and mitigation measures that may be needed for the expanded project.

1. Before You Go: Read the briefing describing the Burma agricultural project.

2. On Your Virtual Field Visit:

- Note the key aspects of the *baseline conditions*;
- Identify the *potential impacts* from the existing and proposed expansion of activities and how significant they may be;
- Look for evidence of environmental management measures that are in place and their effectiveness;
- Gather as much information from your field visit as possible to help evaluate potential impacts from the proposed expansion and begin to identify appropriate mitigation measures.

3. Back at the Office: As a group, discuss key potential impacts of the expansion activities. Use the *Small-Scale Guidelines* excerpt as a reference. Discuss mitigation/management approaches. Discuss the effects of context on both the significance of impacts and appropriate mitigation approaches. Facilitators will serve as resources throughout the process.

Please be prepared to report out the results of your discussions.