

Session 4.

Field Visit #1: Practicing Core EIA Skills

(3:30)

Objectives

Undertake a field visit exercise to build and apply the core EIA skills briefed in Session 4.

Format:

0:30 classroom preparation/briefing

2:00 field visits (including transit)

1:00 working groups & brief report-out/plenary synthesis

Summary/Instructions

The previous session presented the basic theory of baseline characterization, impact evaluation, and mitigation. This session, which involves a field visit and classroom follow-up, practices these skills. We will:

1. Identify key elements of the baseline situation at the visited sites.
2. Identify and evaluate potential impacts/issues of concern of the ongoing activities at these sites.
3. Identify mitigation measures that have been put in place and their adequacy.
4. Identify mitigation measures that can improve the overall design/implementation of the activity and thus help reduce or alleviate potential adverse impacts.

By using sector guidance from the *Sector Environmental Guidelines* as a key resource, the session also builds familiarity with the *Guidelines*.

Team Assembly and Site(s)

The training team will brief the site visit and divide us into working teams. The site(s) to be visited are briefed on the following pages.

1. Classroom Preparation (0:30)

As a team review the briefing for your site (following pages).

Identify the most critical potential environmental impacts of the activity(ies) you will encounter at your site, and other ways in which design and management of such activities can be environmentally UNSound.

(Key reference: relevant Sector Environmental Guideline).

Based on this discussion, **identify** together the most relevant elements of the baseline situation to observe and assess on our field visits.

(That is, what information does the team need to decide whether a *potential* impact or ESDM “deficit” is real and significant for the facility/site in question?)

For any sites that are already in operation or advanced construction, note that the baseline situation includes both the environment around the facility *and* the facility itself.

2. Field visit (2:00, including travel time)

Each team will visit their assigned site where they will receive a guided tour, have the opportunity for independent observation, and have a question and answer session with their host.

During the site visit:

1. **Observe:** (1) What exists and what is happening at the site (the baseline situation); (2) How has the activity at the site affected the environment? Do the issues appear serious? (3) Are there any mitigation measure in place to mitigate adverse impacts and how adequate are they?

(If relevant, be on the lookout for hygiene or occupational safety and health issues that may affect staff or community health and safety.)

2. **Talk with & Listen to people at/around the site.** This will be accomplished through informal interviews with those you find around the site. Those to be consulted may include: the local community, government officers, some of your colleagues who may have had experiences with that project or similar ones). Remember to talk to both men and women and any disadvantaged groups.

We may observe ESDM deficits at each site. But please remember that we visit as observers and invited guests, not auditors or inspectors. We should observe, listen, and by all means ask questions— but not offer criticism to our hosts. Also, we must not give the impression that additional assistance will follow from our visit!

3. Classroom follow-up & synthesis (1:00)

Each team will re-convene in the classroom at the beginning of Day 2. Using the information from the site visit, each team will:

- Organize and analyze the information/ data collected from the field to summarize (1) the most relevant elements of the baseline situation and (2) ongoing environmental management efforts and measures (if any).
- On this basis, decide which of the potential adverse impacts and other potential “ESDM failures” are real and present serious concerns.
- Of these, which are not being addressed with mitigation/environmental management measures? (Or are being inadequately addressed?)
- Suggest corrective measures (mitigation) to address these issues.

Teams should record their findings in bullet form. The relevant *Sector Environmental Guideline* will be the key reference for potential impacts and mitigation measures. Facilitators will serve as resources throughout the process.

*Note that this session is intended to practice basic observation, impact identification and mitigation design skills—not to practice development of Reg. 216 environmental documentation. Thus (for those who already know these terms), working group outputs are **not** expected to be in the form of an IEE outline or phrased in terms of “recommended determinations.”*

Teams will not present their findings, but the facilitator will lead a brief (~15 minute) synthesis session, soliciting a sample of individual and group comments and observations.