

Session 4.

Practicing Core EIA Skills:

Virtual Field Visit

Summary

The previous session presented the basic theory of baseline characterization, impact evaluation, mitigation, and monitoring. This session builds off this theory, providing an opportunity to practice these skills in a “virtual field visit.” By using sector guidance from the *USAID Sector Environmental Guidelines* as a key resource, the session also builds familiarity with the *Guidelines*.

Session 4a: Briefing (approx. 15 minutes)

During this pre-virtual field work component, participants will receive instructions on the methodology and objectives of the virtual field exercise. This classroom preparation will enable participants to understand general baseline conditions of the site to be assessed, as well as the types of activities proposed for implementation. Small groups will also be formed during this period.

Session 4b: Virtual Field Visits (approx. 75 minutes)

In this session, we undertake virtual field visits to practice the core EIA skills of baseline identification, identifying impacts of concern, and mitigation design.

We will visit an activity that has been in operation for some time, with USAID-funded rehabilitation and expansion activities planned. The activity presents certain environmental concerns as matters now stand—and, if nothing is done, these concerns (impacts) will grow as a result of expansion.

In the visit, we play the roles of a mission sector team or an IP that will undertake the rehabilitation/expansion. We undertake the visits to improve our understanding of the implementation context and to allow us to better understand the environmental issues and mitigations that may be needed.

The project scenarios are described in the briefs on the following pages.

1. Before You Go: Read the briefing relevant to your group. Utilizing the expertise in your group, identify the *potential impacts* of this type of activity.

2. On Your Virtual Field Visit:

- Note the aspects of the *baseline situation*
- Look for evidence that the *potential impacts* you have identified are *actual*—and if yes, how significant they may be.
- Look for evidence of the environmental management measures that may be in place, and their effectiveness
- Gather as much information from your “field” visit as possible to help evaluate impacts and design mitigation measures

3. Back In The Classroom As a group, review key potential impacts of the activities. Use the *Small Scale Guidelines* excerpt as a reference. Discuss primary 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.

*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.”*