

**GUIDELINE FOR INVOLVING SOCIAL ASSESSMENT  
SPECIALISTS  
IN  
EIA PROCESSES**

**Prepared for**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND  
DEVELOPMENT PLANNING, WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE**

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## PREFACE

The purpose of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is to provide decision-makers (be they government authorities, the project proponent or financial institutions) with adequate and appropriate information about the potential positive and negative impacts of a proposed development and associated management actions in order to make an informed decision regarding whether or not to approve, proceed with or finance the development. The EIA process also informs the public of the proposed development and enables them to participate in the process of identifying potential impacts and opportunities.

For EIA processes to retain their role and usefulness in supporting decision-making, the involvement of specialists during the EIA process needs to be improved in order to:

- Add greater value to project planning and design;
- Adequately evaluate reasonable alternatives;
- Accurately predict and assess potential project benefits and negative impacts;
- Provide practical recommendations for avoiding or adequately managing negative impacts and enhancing benefits, and;
- Supply enough relevant information at the most appropriate stage of the EIA process to address adequately the key issues and concerns, and effectively inform decision-making in support of sustainable development.

It is important to note that not all EIA processes require specialist input; broadly speaking, specialist involvement is needed when the environment could be significantly affected by the proposed activity, where that environment is valued by or important to society, and/or where there is insufficient information to determine whether or not unavoidable impacts would be significant.

The purpose of this series of guidelines is to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of specialist involvement in EIA processes. The guidelines aim to improve the capacity of roleplayers to anticipate, request, plan, review and discuss specialist involvement in EIA processes. Specifically, they aim to improve the capacity of EIA practitioners to draft appropriate terms of reference for specialist input and assist all roleplayers in evaluating whether or not specialist input to the EIA process was appropriate for the type of development and environmental context. Furthermore, they aim to ensure that specialist inputs support the development of effective, practical Environmental Management Plans where projects are authorised to proceed (refer to *Guideline for Environmental Management Plans*).

The guidelines draw on best practice in EIA in general, and within specialist fields of expertise in particular, to address the following issues listed below related to the timing, scope and quality of specialist input. The terms “specialist involvement” and “input” have been used in preference to “specialist assessment” and “studies” to indicate that the scope of specialists’ contribution (if required) depends on the nature of the project, the environmental context and the amount of available information and does not always entail detailed studies or assessment of impacts.

	<b>ISSUES</b>
<b>TIMING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When should specialists be involved in the EIA process; i.e. at what stage in the EIA process should specialists be involved (if at all) and what triggers the need for their input?</li> </ul>
<b>SCOPE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which aspects must be addressed through specialist involvement; i.e. what is the purpose and scope of specialist involvement?</li> <li>• What are appropriate approaches that specialists can employ?</li> <li>• What qualifications, skills and experience are required?</li> </ul>
<b>QUALITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What triggers the review of specialist studies by different roleplayers?</li> <li>• What are the review criteria against which specialist inputs can be evaluated to ensure that they meet minimum requirements are reasonable, objective and professionally sound?</li> </ul>

The following guidelines form part of this first series of guidelines for involving specialists in EIA processes:

- Guideline for determining the scope of specialist involvement in EIA processes;
- Guideline for the review of specialist input in EIA processes;
- Guideline for involving biodiversity specialists in EIA processes;
- Guideline for involving hydrogeologists in EIA processes;
- Guideline for involving visual and aesthetic specialists in EIA processes;
- Guideline for involving heritage specialists in EIA processes;
- Guideline for involving economists in EIA processes.

The *Guideline for determining the scope of specialist involvement in EIA processes* and the *Guideline for the review of specialist input in EIA processes* provide generic guidance applicable to any specialist input to the EIA process and clarify the roles and responsibilities of the different roleplayers involved in the scoping and review of specialist input. It is recommended that these two guidelines be read first to introduce the generic concepts underpinning the subsequent guidelines, which are focused on specific specialist disciplines.

***Who is the target audience for these guidelines?***

The guidelines are directed at authorities, EIA practitioners, specialists, proponents, financial institutions and other interested and affected parties involved in EIA processes. Although the guidelines have been developed with specific reference to the Western Cape province of South Africa, their core elements are more widely applicable.

***What type of environmental assessment processes and developments are these guidelines applicable to?***

The guidelines have been developed to support project-level EIA processes regardless of whether they are used during the early project planning phase to inform planning and design decisions (i.e. during pre-application planning) or as part of a legally defined EIA process to obtain statutory approval for a proposed project (i.e. during screening, basic assessment, scoping and/or impact assessment). Where specialist input may be required the guidelines promote early, focused and appropriate involvement of specialists in EIA processes in order to encourage proactive consideration of potentially

significant impacts. In so doing, negative impacts may be avoided or effectively managed and benefits enhanced through due consideration of alternatives and changes to the project.

The guidelines aim to be applicable to a range of types and scales of development, as well as different biophysical, social, economic and governance contexts.

### ***What will these guidelines not do?***

In order to retain their relevance in the context of changing legislation, the guidelines promote the principles of EIA best practice without being tied to specific legislated national or provincial EIA terms and requirements. They therefore do not clarify the specific administrative, procedural or reporting requirements and timeframes for applications in order to obtain statutory approval. They should, therefore, be read in conjunction with the applicable legislation, regulations and procedural guidelines to ensure that mandatory requirements are met.

It is widely recognized that no amount of theoretical information on how best to plan and coordinate specialist inputs, or to provide or review specialist input, can replace the value of practical experience of coordinating, being responsible for and/or reviewing specialist inputs. Only hands-on experience can develop sound judgment on issues such as the level of detail needed or expected from specialists to inform decision-makers adequately. For this reason, the guidelines should not be viewed as prescriptive and inflexible documents. Their intention is to provide best practice guidance to improve the quality of specialist input.

Furthermore, the guidelines do not intend to create experts out of non-specialists. Although the guidelines outline broad approaches that are available to the specialist discipline (e.g. field survey, desktop review, consultation, modeling), specific methods (e.g. the type of model or sampling technique to be used) cannot be prescribed. The guidelines should therefore not be used indiscriminately without due consideration of the particular context and circumstances within which an EIA is undertaken, as this influences both the approach and the methods available and used by specialists.

### ***How are these guidelines structured?***

The specialist guidelines have been structured to make them user-friendly. They are divided into six parts, as follows:

- **Part A:** Background;
- **Part B:** Triggers and key issues potentially requiring specialist input;
- **Part C:** Planning and coordination of specialist inputs (drawing up terms of reference);
- **Part D:** Providing specialist input;
- **Part E:** Review of specialist input; and,
- **Part F:** References.

Part A provides grounding in the specialist subject matter for all users. It is expected that authorities and peer reviewers will make most use of Parts B and E; EIA practitioners and project proponents Parts B, C and E; specialists Part C and D; and other stakeholders Parts B, D and E. Part F gives useful sources of information for those who wish to explore the specialist topic.

## SUMMARY

This guideline deals with the involvement of social assessment specialists in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) processes. In doing so the guideline provides information on:

- Background to Social Impact Assessment (SIA) and its development;
- Legislative setting for SIA in South Africa;
- Definition of social impacts and social impact assessment;
- Timing and social impacts;
- Key components of an SIA;
- Approaches to SIA; and,
- Key objectives of SIA.

These aspects are discussed briefly below.

### **Background to SIA**

Following the promulgation of U.S. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in 1969 and the introduction of EIA there has been significant research undertaken in the field of SIA. In 1994 the US Inter-organisational Committee on Guidelines and Principles for Social Impact Assessment produced the *Guidelines and Principles for Social Impact Assessment*. This document outlines a set of guidelines and principles to assist agencies and private organisations and interest groups with fulfilling their mandates under NEPA and is regarded as a landmark document in the history of SIA. The Guidelines and Principles were updated by in 2002 (IAIA, 2002). However, despite the developments in the field of SIA, when compared with the biophysical environment, SIA has not been widely adopted in the assessment and decision making-process (Burdge, 2003b). There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly there is a lack of consensus amongst practitioners and government agencies regarding the definition of SIA. Secondly, there is a need for better models to understand the causal linkages between events and social impacts (Burdge, 2003b). There is also a tendency for SIA to focus on negative social impacts, without any comment on social and development objectives.

Despite these potential problems, social specialist input in EIA processes is essential to ensure that the positive benefits associated with development are enhanced and the negative impacts are avoided and/or mitigated. Social assessment specialist input in EIA processes can therefore play a positive role in the development process by enriching the understanding of the social environment and communities affected by the proposed development. In this way the SIA process can enable the proposed development to become more socially sustainable. The need to address social issues is also a legal requirement.

### **Legislative setting for SIA in South Africa**

The need to assess social issues as part of the EIA process is underpinned by two key pieces of legislation, namely the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the National Environmental Management Act. Each contains rights, principles and objectives that inform the SIA Guidelines and provides an understanding of what constitutes social sustainability. The Constitution is the supreme law of the Republic. Chapter 2, the Bill of Rights, enshrines the rights of all people in the country and affirms the democratic

values of human dignity, equality and freedom. These rights represent the cornerstone of democracy in South Africa. The Bill of Rights applies to all law, and binds the Legislature, the Executive, the Judiciary and all organs of state. The National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) provides for cooperative environmental governance by establishing a set of principles for decision-making on matters affecting the environment. The preamble to NEMA and the principles contained therein have a significant bearing on the social environment. In this regard the preamble refers to a number of the basic rights set out in Chapter 2 (Bill of Rights) of the Constitution. These include reference to the right of all persons to a an environment that is not harmful to his or her health or well-being, the need for the State to respect, protect, promote and fulfil the social, economic and environmental rights of everyone and strive to meet the basic needs of previously disadvantaged communities, and the promotion of sustainable development that requires the integration of social, economic and environmental factors in the planning, implementation and evaluation of decisions to ensure that development serves present and future generations.

In addition to these key Acts the National Water Act, Promotion of Administrative Justice Act and Development Facilitation Act (DFA) also have an important bearing on social issues. The significance of the DFA is linked to the fact that a significant number of EIAs are linked to the transformation of land uses. In this regard the DFA contains a number of important planning principles that have a bearing on assessing the fit with planning requirements. Section 9.3 of the Guidelines lists a number of key Western Cape Provincial Guideline documents that also have an important bearing on assessing fit with planning and policy requirements.

### **Definition of social impacts and Social Impact Assessment**

Social impacts can be defined as “The consequences to human populations of any public or private actions (these include policies, programmes, plans and/or projects) that alter the ways in which people live, work, play, relate to one another, organise to meet their needs and generally live and cope as members of society. These impacts are felt at various levels, including individual level, family or household level, community, organisation or society level. Some social impacts are felt by the body as a physical reality, while other social impacts are perceptual or emotional.” (Vanclay, 2002).

However, the issue of social impacts is complicated by the way in which different people from different cultural, ethnic, religious, gender, and educational backgrounds etc view the world. This is referred to as the “social construct of reality”. The social construct of reality informs people’s worldview and the way in which they react to changes.

Social Impact Assessment is the process of analyzing (predicting, evaluating and reflecting) and managing the intended and unintended consequences on the human environment of planned interventions (policies, programmes, plans and projects) and any social change processes invoked by those interventions so as to bring about a more sustainable and equitable biophysical and human environment (Vanclay, 2002).

### **Timing and social impacts**

Social impacts vary in both time and space. In terms of timing, all projects and policies go through a series of phases, usually starting with initial planning, followed by implementation (construction), operation and finally closure (decommissioning). The activities, and hence the type and duration of the social impacts associated with each of these phases are likely to differ. It is therefore essential for the SIA to develop a timeline

that represents the stages that the proposed project or intervention is expected to go through.

### **Key components of a SIA**

The key activities in the SIA process include:

- Describing and obtaining an understanding of the proposed intervention (type, scale, location), the communities likely to be affected and determining the need and scope of the SIA;
- Collecting baseline data on the current social environment and historical social trends;
- Identifying potential alternatives;
- Identifying and collecting data on the Social Impact Assessment variables and social change processes related to the proposed intervention. This requires consultation with affected individuals and communities;
- Assessing and documenting the significance of social impacts associated with the proposed intervention;
- Assessing the alternatives and identifying potential mitigation measures; and,
- Developing a Monitoring and Evaluation Programme.

### **Approaches to SIA**

There are essentially two basic approaches to undertaking SIAs, namely the Technocratic and Participatory approach. The technocratic approach relies on the interpretation of secondary data, while the participatory approach incorporates the knowledge and experiences of individuals most affected by the proposed changes into the assessment process. In most instances the approach to identifying and assessing social impacts involves a combination of the two approaches. This highlights the importance of using experienced SIA specialists and public consultation.

### **Key objectives of SIA**

SIAs should enable the authorities, project proponents, individuals, communities and organisations to understand and be in a position to identify and anticipate the potential social consequences of the implementation of a proposed policy, programme, plan or project. The SIA process should also alert communities and individuals to the proposed project and possible social impacts, while at the same time allowing them to assess the implications and identify potential alternatives. The assessment process should also alert proponents and planners to the likelihood and nature of social impacts and enable them to anticipate and predict these impacts in advance so that the findings and recommendations of the assessment are incorporated into and inform the planning and decision-making process.

As a process, SIA must enable and allow affected individuals and communities to identify what they feel constitute social impacts. This is likely to vary from individual to individual and likewise between different communities. SIA should therefore enable people and decision-makers to understand in advance the consequences to individuals and groups of a proposed actions or policy changes. In so doing, the social assessment process should ensure that the social concerns of the community and individuals are considered at the earliest, and each subsequent stage of the planning and development process, and not only after a decision has been taken. In this regard, SIA should be considered as a “framework for incorporating participation and social analysis into the

design and delivery of development projects” (World Bank, 1995). Given South Africa’s needs, the improvement of social well being (with a particular focus on developmental objectives such as poverty reduction and job creation) should be assessed as an issue in all SIAs. Within the South African and developing world context the SIA process should therefore include a commitment to:

- The principles of sustainable development and social sustainability;
- Vulnerable groups;
- Meeting basic needs and services;
- Livelihood strategies;
- Fairness and equity;
- Social justice;
- Openness and participation; and,
- Accountability.

Based on the core values and principles the SIA process should seek to:

- Identify and assess the factors that contribute to the overall quality of life (social well-being) of people, not just their standard of living;
- Identify and assess the needs of vulnerable, at risk, groups and/or ethnic minorities or indigenous peoples;
- Identify and assess impact equity. Social assessments should seek to clearly identify which individuals, groups, organisations and communities stand to benefit from the proposed intervention and those that stand to be negatively affected. In so doing the assessment must identify and emphasize vulnerability and underrepresented groups;
- Identify and assess the gender aspects of impacts;
- Identify and assess the fit of the proposed development in terms of key legislative, policy and planning requirements;
- Acknowledge and value the existence of spiritual worldviews and the existence of sacred places;
- Acknowledge and value cultural diversity and differing value systems between and within cultures;
- Recognise that social, economic and biophysical systems and impacts are inextricably interconnected. Social assessments therefore, need to identify and understand the impact pathways that are created when changes in one domain trigger impacts across other domains;
- Acknowledge and incorporate local knowledge and experience into the assessment process;
- Identify and assess developmental opportunities and not merely the mitigation of negative or unintended outcomes;
- Address poverty reduction and seek to improve the position of the worst-off members in society;
- Identify and assess second and higher order impacts and cumulative impacts;
- Form an integral part of the development and planning process and inform all stages of the process, from inception to decommissioning and closure; and
- Identify and assess alternatives.

The role of the SIA process should therefore extend beyond the ex-ante (in advance) prediction of social impacts to include issues related to the empowerment of local

people, gender issues, minority groups, capacity building, equity, development and poverty reduction.

## PART A: BACKGROUND

This part of the guideline introduces the field of Social Impact Assessment; outlines the legal context for SIA in South Africa, the principles and concepts underpinning specialist input on social issues, impact assessment and management, and the role and timing of specialist input in the EIA process.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The term Social Impact Assessment (SIA) was first used in the context of environmental impact following the promulgation of the U.S. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in 1969. One of the first modern references to the need for SIA relates to comments made by one of the indigenous Inuit Chiefs involved in the Alaskan Pipeline Assessment who noted:

*“...now that we have dealt with the problem of permafrost and the caribou and what to do with hot oil, what about changes in the customs and ways of my people” (Dixon, 1978 in Burdge, 1995).*

During the 1970's significant research was undertaken in the field of SIA. The publication of *Our Common Future* in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development, more commonly known as the Brundtland Report after the chairperson of the Commission, Gro Harlem Brundtland, became a landmark document in the debate around environmental, economic and social issues. The report also introduced the term “sustainable development” into popular literature. According to the Commission, sustainable development is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987:43). The report also highlighted the importance of public participation in decision-making. This, together with the focus on sustainable development, led to an increased recognition of the relationship between environmental, economic and social systems.

During the 80's the use of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in the decision-making process also became more widespread. Linked to was the growth of SIAs. In 1994 the US Inter-organisational Committee on Guidelines and Principles for Social Impact Assessment produced the *Guidelines and Principles for Social Impact Assessment*. This document outlines a set of guidelines and principles to assist agencies and private organisations and interest groups with fulfilling their mandates under NEPA and is regarded as landmark document in the history of SIA. The Guidelines and Principles were updated in 2002 (IAIA, 2002). However, despite the developments in the field of SIA, when compared with the biophysical environment, SIA has not been widely adopted in the assessment and decision making-process (Burdge, 2003b). There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly there is a lack of consensus amongst practitioners and government agencies regarding the definition of SIA. Secondly, there is a need for better models to understand and the causal linkages between events and social impacts (Burdge, 2003b). There is also a tendency for SIA to focus on negative social impacts, without any comment on social and development objectives. As a result the positive impacts and benefits associated with planned interventions are not adequately assessed or considered.

In a survey of EIAs undertaken in the UK by Chadwick in 2002 he found that social impacts were seldom included, and when they were addressed the assessment was largely limited to population data, potential employment opportunities and/or community infrastructure needs. In addition, many practitioners confuse public participation with SIA. The major objective of public participation is to inform interested and affected parties of the proposed development and enable them to identify issues of concern, not as a way to measure social impacts in advance of a proposed project development or policy change (Burdge, 2002).

Social assessment specialist input in EIA processes is essential to ensure that the positive benefits associated with development are enhanced and the negative impacts are avoided and or mitigated and can therefore play a positive role in the development process by enriching the understanding of the social environment and the communities affected by the proposed development. In this way the SIA process can enable the proposed development to become more socially sustainable.

The overall purpose of social assessment specialist input is to:

- Describe the affected social environment;
- Identify and assess the potential social impacts, both positive and negative;
- Identify appropriate mitigation measures aimed at enhancing positive impacts and minimizing negative impacts and, where necessary; and,
- Develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Programme for social issues.

While the quality of social specialist inputs into the EIA processes in South Africa have improved with time, there is certainly room for further improvement particularly in respect of unclear or inappropriate terms of reference (TOR), inconsistency in the type of analysis undertaken and integration with other specialist studies. For example, the TOR for some EIAs call for socio-economic specialist studies, requiring the assessment of social and economic issues to be combined in one report, while others call for separate social and economic specialist studies. The profusion of approaches and vagueness of TORs has created unnecessary confusion and has lessened the efficacy of social inputs in the EIA processes. For these reasons, the Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (DEA&DP) embarked on the process of developing a guideline for the involvement of social assessment specialists in EIA processes.

## **2. LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR SIA IN SOUTH AFRICA**

This section provides a brief overview of the legal context for involving social assessment specialists in the EIA process. Readers should be aware that legislation, policies and plans are reviewed periodically. The guidelines therefore do not replace the need to consult the currently applicable legislation, policies and plans.

Legislation and policies reflect societal norms and values. The legislative and policy context therefore plays a critical role in identifying and assessing the potential social impacts associated with a proposed development. In this regard a key component of the SIA process is to assess the proposed development in terms of its fit with key legislative, planning and policy documents. The rights, principles and objectives contained in key

legislation also underpin the concept of social sustainability.

Three major pieces of legislation that make reference to social issues are the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) and the National Water (NWA) Act. Each of these Acts contains rights, principles and objectives which require attention be given to addressing social rights and issues and, as such, support the need to assess social issues and impacts.

In addition to these key Acts the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act and Development Facilitation Act (DFA) also have an important bearing on social issues. The significance of the DFA is linked to the fact that a significant number of EIAs are linked to the transformation of land uses. In this regard the DFA contains a number of important planning principles that have a bearing on assessing the fit with planning requirements. In addition, Section 9.3 of the Guidelines lists a number of key provincial that require consideration in assessing the fit with planning and policy requirements in the Western Cape.

### **Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996)**

Chapter 2, the Bill of Rights, enshrines the rights of all people in the country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom. These rights represent the cornerstone of democracy in South Africa. The Bill of Rights applies to all law, and binds the Legislature, the Executive, the Judiciary and all organs of state. Key rights in the Bill that have a bearing on social rights and issues include:

- Life: Everyone has the right to life;
- Human Dignity: Everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected;
- Equality: Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit from the law;
- Freedom of religion, belief and opinion: Everyone has the right of freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion;
- Environment: Everyone has the right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well being, and to have the environment protected for the benefit of present and future generations, through reasonable legislative and other measures that prevent pollution and ecological degradation, promote conservation and secure ecologically sustainable development and the use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development;
- Property: No person may be deprived of property except in terms of the law of general application, and no law may permit arbitrary deprivation of property. Property may be expropriated only in terms of the law of general application for a public purpose or in the public interest. The public interest includes South Africa's commitment to land reform and to reforms to bring about equitable access to all South Africa's natural resources. Property is not limited to land;
- Health care, food, water and social security: Everyone has the right to have access to health care services, including reproductive health care, sufficient food and water and social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependents, appropriate social assistance;
- Language and culture: Everyone has the right to use the language and participate in the cultural life of their choice, but no one exercising these rights may do so in a

- manner inconsistent with any provision of the Bill of Rights;
- Cultural, religious and linguistic communities: Persons belonging to cultural, religious or linguistic communities may not be denied the right, with other members of the that community to enjoy their culture, practice their religion and use their language, and to form, join and maintain cultural, religious and linguistic associations and other organs of civil society. These rights must be exercised in a manner that is consistent with any provision in the Bill of Rights;
- Access to information: Everyone has the right of access to any information held by the state and any information that is held by another person and that is required for the exercise or protection of any rights; and,
- Just administrative action: Everyone has the right to administrative action that is lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair. Everyone whose rights have been adversely affected by administrative action has the right to be given written reasons. This right has been given effect via the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (PAJA) (see below).

### **National Environmental Management (Act 107 of 1998)**

The preamble to NEMA and the principles contained therein have a significant bearing on the need to identify and assess social impacts. In this regard the preamble refers to a number of the basic rights set out in Chapter 2 (Bill of Rights) of the Constitution. These include reference to the right of all persons to an environment that is not harmful to his or her health or well-being, the need for the State to respect, protect, promote and fulfil the social, economic and environmental rights of everyone and strive to meet the basic needs of previously disadvantaged communities, and the promotion of sustainable development that requires the integration of social, economic and environmental factors in the planning, implementation and evaluation of decisions to ensure that development serves present and future generations

The following NEMA principles have an important bearing on social issues:

- Environmental management must place people and their needs at the forefront of its concern, and serve their physical, psychological, developmental, cultural and social interests equitably;
- Development must be socially, environmentally and economically sustainable;
- Environmental management must be integrated, acknowledging that all elements of the environment are linked and interrelated, and it must take into account the effects of decisions on all aspects of the environment and all people in the environment by pursuing the selection of the best practicable environmental option;
- Environmental justice must be pursued so that adverse environmental impacts shall not be distributed in such a manner as to unfairly discriminate against any person, particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged persons;
- Equitable access to environmental resources, benefits and services to meet basic human needs and ensure human well-being must be pursued and special measures may be taken to ensure access thereto by categories of persons disadvantaged by unfair discrimination;
- The participation of all interested and affected parties in environmental governance must be promoted, and all people must have the opportunity to develop the understanding, skills and capacity necessary for achieving equitable and effective participation, and participation by vulnerable and disadvantaged persons must be ensured;
- Decisions must take into account the interests, needs and values of all interested

and affected parties, and this includes recognising all forms of knowledge, including traditional and ordinary knowledge;

- Community well-being and empowerment must be promoted through environmental education, the raising of environmental awareness, the sharing of knowledge and experience and other appropriate means;
- The social, economic and environmental impacts of activities, including disadvantages and benefits, must be considered, assessed and evaluated, and decisions must be appropriate in light of such consideration and assessment;
- The right of workers to refuse work that is harmful to human health or the environment and to be informed of dangers must be respected and protected;
- Decisions must be taken in an open and transparent manner, and access to information must be provided in accordance with the law;
- The environment is held in public trust for the people. The beneficial use of environmental resources must serve the public interest and the environment must be protected as the peoples' common heritage; and,
- The vital role of women and youth in environmental management and development must be recognised and their full participation therein must be promoted.

### **National Water Act (Act 36 of 1998)**

The fundamental principles of the NWA recognize that sustainability and equity are central guiding principles in the protection, use, development, conservation, management and control of South Africa's water resources. These guiding principles also recognize the basic human needs of current and future generations and the need to promote social and economic development through the use of water. In this regard the purpose of the NWA is to ensure that South Africa's water resources are protected, used, developed, conserved, managed and controlled in ways that take into account factors that are central to the assessment of social issues, including:

- Meeting basic needs of current and future generations;
- Promoting equitable access to water;
- Redressing the results of past racial and gender discrimination;
- Promoting the efficient, sustainable and beneficial use of water in the public interest;
- Facilitating, social and economic development; and,
- Providing for the growing demand for water.

Each of these objectives has significant social implications. Ensuring that they are met requires some form of social assessment and analysis.

### **Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (Act 3 of 2000)**

In terms of the Bill of Rights everyone has the right to administrative action that is lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair. This right has been given effect via the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (PAJA). The provisions of the PAJA apply to all decisions of all organs of state exercising public power or performing a public function in terms of any legislation that adversely affects the rights of any person. The Act also prescribes the procedure that must be followed by an organ of state when it takes decisions. If an organ of state implements a decision that impacts on an individual or community without granting them an opportunity to comment, the ultimate decision will be unlawful and may be set aside. The Act also imposes a duty on organs of state to explain and justify the

manner in which they have reached their decisions and, in the case of social issues, how these issues were considered in the decision-making process.

### **Development Facilitation Act (Act 67 of 1995)**

A number of key planning principles set out in Section 3 of the DFA have a bearing on assessing a proposed development in terms of the national planning requirements. The planning principles include:

- Promoting the integration of the social, economic, institutional and physical aspects of land development;
- Promoting integrated land development in rural and urban areas in support of each other;
- Promoting the availability of residential and employment opportunities in close proximity to or integrated with each other;
- Optimising the use of existing resources including such resources relating to agriculture, land, minerals, bulk infrastructure, roads, transportation and social facilities;
- Promoting a diverse combination of land uses, also at the level of individual erven or subdivisions of land
- Discouraging the phenomenon of "urban sprawl" in urban areas and contributing to the development of more compact towns and cities;
- Contributing to the correction of the historically distorted spatial patterns of settlement in the Republic and to the optimum use of existing infrastructure in excess of current needs;
- Encouraging environmentally sustainable land development practices and processes;
- Promoting land development which is within the fiscal, institutional and administrative means of the Republic;
- Promoting the establishment of viable communities; and,
- Promoting sustained protection of the environment.

### **3. PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPTS UNDERPINNING SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSORS' INVOLVEMENT IN EIA PROCESSES**

This section covers the following:

- Definition of social impacts;
- Definition of social impact assessment;
- Core values and principles that underpin SIA;
- Timing and social impacts; and,
- Common EIA terms and concepts.

#### **3.1 Definition of social impacts**

Social impacts can be defined as:

*"The consequences to human populations of any public or private actions (these include*

*policies, programmes, plans and/or projects) that alter the ways in which people live, work, play, relate to one another, organise to meet their needs and generally live and cope as members of society. These impacts are felt at various levels, including individual level, family or household level, community, organisation or society level. Some social impacts are felt by the body as physical reality, while other social impacts are perceptual or emotional.” (Vanclay, 2002)*

A convenient way of conceptualising social impacts is to view them as changes to:

- People’s way of life – how they live, work, play and relate to other people on a day-to-day basis;
- Their culture – their shared beliefs, customs, values and language;
- Their community – its cohesion, stability, character, services and facilities;
- Their political system – the extent to which people are able to participate in decisions that affect their lives and the openness of decision making;
- Their environment – the quality of the air and water people use; the availability and quality of the food they eat and the level of hazard or risk they face, and their access to resources etc;
- Their health and well-being – their overall health, including physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity;
- Their personal and property rights – particularly whether people are economically affected, or experience personal disadvantage, which may include a violation of their civil liberties;
- Their fears and aspirations – their perceptions about their safety, their fears about the future of their community, and their hopes for their future and the future of their children.

In order to understand the role of SIA in the EIA process one needs to define what social impacts are. This issue is complicated by the way in which different people from different cultural, ethnic, religious, gender, and educational backgrounds etc view the world. This is referred to as the “social construct of reality”. The social construct of reality informs people’s worldview and the way in which they react to changes. However, in many instances these constructs are frequently treated as perceptions or emotions, to be distinguished from “reality.” One of the key challenges facing SIA, therefore, does not necessarily involve the physical disruption of human populations, but understanding the meanings, perceptions and/or social significance of these changes. The “social construct of reality” is a characteristic of all social groups, including the agencies that attempt to implement changes, as well as the communities that are affected (Guidelines and Principles for Social Impact Assessment, 1994). The tendency of development agencies and proponents to dismiss the concerns of others as being merely imagined and perceived is therefore a key issue that needs to be addressed by social impact assessments.

The challenges that SIA faces associated with the “social construct of reality” are further compounded by the dominance of technocratic rationality as the established approach to natural resource decision-making and assessment (Burdge and Vanclay, 1995). Technocratic rationality dominates the current approach to the way in which EIAs are undertaken and assessed. This approach focuses on “measuring, predicting and reporting” on the impacts of proposals in order to objectively investigate alternatives and select the course of action with “the greatest net benefits for society” (Formby, 1990).

The approach is favoured by engineers and natural scientists who are often uncomfortable with, or about, the involvement of what they regard to be an ill-informed public (Dugdale and West, 1991). However, despite the emphasis on objectivity, technocratic rationality is ill-equipped to deal either with the competing interests, beliefs, values and aspirations that characterize complex social situations, or with the active participation of multiple stakeholders in working through these situations (Lockie, 2003). However, Rickson *et al* (1998) argue that this is not just about conflicting worldviews, but also about power. It is about whose definition of an impact, an aspiration, a value and a fact are considered legitimate and whose is dismissed as subjective, emotional and irrelevant (Lockie *et al*, 1999). The quantifiable, technocratic rationality approach empowers governments and developers by highlighting positive impacts, such as regional economic and employment opportunities, while ignoring issues that cannot be measured within affected communities and the subjective and cultural meanings for these communities (Burdge and Vanclay, 1995; Lockie *et al*, 1999). SIA therefore has a critical role to play in ensuring that the needs and concerns of affected and vulnerable individuals and communities are included in the decision-making process. SIA therefore also plays an important role in empowering communities.

### 3.2 Definition of Social Impact Assessment

When considering social impacts it is important to recognise that social change is a natural and on-going process (Burdge, 1995). However, it is also important to recognise and understand that policies, plans, programmes and/or projects implemented by government departments and/or private institutions have the potential to influence and alter both the *rate* and *direction* of social change.

SIA is the process by which social impacts are identified and assessed. Through this process measures are identified to mitigate and manage these impacts. SIA is therefore not only confined to the identification and prediction (*ex-ante*) of social impacts. It also includes the process of analyzing, monitoring and managing the intended and unintended social consequences of policies, programmes, plans and projects (Vanclay, 2002). SIA should therefore be seen as an overarching framework that embodies the evaluation of all impacts on humans and all ways in which people and communities interact with their social, economic and biophysical surroundings (Vanclay, 2002).

#### Box 1: Definition of Social Impact Assessment

Social Impact Assessment is the process of analyzing (predicting, evaluating and reflecting) and managing the intended and unintended consequences on the human environment of planned interventions (policies, programmes, plans and projects) and any social change processes invoked by those interventions so as to bring about a more sustainable and equitable biophysical and human environment (Vanclay, 2002).

SIA should enable the authorities, project proponents, individuals, communities and organisations to understand and be in a position to identify and anticipate the potential social consequences of the implementation of a proposed policy, programme, plan or project. The SIA process should alert communities and individuals to the proposed project and possible social impacts, while at the same time allowing them to assess the

implications and identify potential alternatives. The assessment process should also alert proponents and planners to the likelihood and nature of social impacts and enable them to anticipate and predict these impacts in advance so that the findings and recommendations of the assessment are incorporated into and inform the planning and decision-making process.

As a process, SIA must enable and allow affected individuals and communities to identify what they feel constitute social impacts. This is likely to vary from individual to individual and likewise between different communities. SIA should therefore enable people and decision-makers to understand in advance the consequences to individuals and groups of proposed actions or policy changes. In so doing, the social assessment process should ensure that the social concerns of the community and individuals are considered at the earliest, and each subsequent stage of the planning and development process, and not only after a decision has been taken. In this regard, SIA should be considered as a “framework for incorporating participation and social analysis into the design and delivery of development projects” (World Bank, 1995). Given South Africa’s needs, the improvement of social well-being (with a particular focus on developmental objectives, such as poverty reduction and job creation) should be assessed as an issue in all SIAs.

Within the South African and developing world context the SIA process should therefore include a commitment to:

- The principles of sustainable development and social sustainability;
- Vulnerable groups;
- Meeting basic needs and services;
- Livelihood strategies;
- Fairness and equity;
- Social justice;
- Openness and participation; and,
- Accountability.

### 3.3 Core values and principles

**Core values** are fundamental, enduring statements of belief that are strongly held and accepted as premises, while **principles** are general statements of common understanding (Vanclay, 2003). **Guidelines** can be defined as action statements that provide clarity on how things should be done. Social assessment guidelines should be based on a set of principles that are derived from a set of core values (Vanclay, 2003).

The core SIA values and principles outlined in the social assessment literature are consistent with the principles contained in the South African Bill of Rights (Chapter 2, SA Constitution Act No 108 of 1996) and the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) No.107 of 1998. The necessity of applying these principles is therefore not only linked to the need to follow best practice but also the need to meet South Africa’s legal requirements. The key policies are listed in Section 2.

The core values and principles that underpin SIA are listed in Box 2, 3 and 4.

### **Box 2: Core SIA values (Vanclay, 2003)**

- There are fundamental human rights that are shared equally across all cultures, and by males and females alike;
- There is a right to have these fundamental human rights protected by the rule of law, with justice applied equally and fairly to all and available to all;
- There is a right to live and work in an environment that is conducive to good health and to good quality of life and which enables the development of social potential;
- Social dimensions of the environment – specifically but not exclusively peace, quality of social relationships, sense of belonging and freedom from fear – are important aspects of peoples health, well-being and quality of life;
- People have the right to be involved in the decision-making process about planned interventions that will affect their lives; and,
- Local knowledge and experience are valuable and can be used to enhance planned interventions.

### **Box 3: SIA principles (Inter-organizational Committee, 1994)**

- *Involve the diverse public:* Identify and involve all potentially affected groups and individuals;
- *Analyse impact equity:* Clearly identify who will win and who will lose, and emphasise vulnerable and underrepresented groups;
- *Focus on assessment:* Deal with the issues and public concerns that really count, not the just the issues that are easy to count, or deal with;
- *Identify methods and assumptions and define significance:* Describe how the SIA is conducted, assumptions used and how significance was determined;
- *Provide feedback on social impacts to project planners:* Identify problems that could be solved with changes to the proposed action or alternatives;
- *Use SIA practitioners:* Trained social scientists employing social science methods will provide the best results;
- *Establish monitoring and mitigation programmes:* Manage uncertainty by monitoring and mitigating adverse impacts;
- *Identify data sources:* Use published scientific literature, secondary data and primary data from the affected area; and,
- *Plan for gaps in the data:* Evaluate the missing information and develop a strategy for proceeding.

#### **Box 4: Key SIA principles (Vanclay, 2003)**

- Equity considerations should be a fundamental element of SIA and development planning;
- The needs of vulnerable at risk, groups and/or ethnic minorities or indigenous peoples should always be considered;
- SIA should focus on poverty reduction and always seek to improve the position of the worst off members in society;
- SIA should consider the quality of life (social well-being) of people not just their standard of living;
- The gender aspects of impacts should always be considered;
- Many of the social impacts associated with planned interventions can be predicted;
- Planned interventions can be modified to reduce their negative social impacts and enhance their positive impacts;
- SIA should recognize and preserve the existence of social diversity;
- SIA should seek to maintain community integrity and viability;
- SIA should be an integral part of the development process, involved in all stages from inception to follow-up audit;
- There should be a focus on socially sustainable development, with SIA contributing to the determination of best development alternative(s) – SIA (and EIA) have more to offer than just being an arbiter between economic benefit and social cost;
- In all planned interventions and their assessments, avenues should be developed to build the social and human capital of local communities and to strengthen democratic processes;
- In all planned interventions, but especially where there are unavoidable impacts, ways to turn impacted peoples into beneficiaries should be investigated;
- Enhancement programmes should be developed that stimulate a range of activities in the community and encourage diversity of economic, cultural and social activity even if it requires cross-subsidisation from other activities;
- The SIA must give due consideration to the alternatives of any planned intervention, but especially in cases when there are likely to be unavoidable impacts;
- Full consideration should be given to the potential mitigation measures of social and environmental impacts, even where impacted communities may approve the planned intervention and where they may be regarded as beneficiaries;
- Local knowledge and experience and acknowledgment of different local cultural values should be incorporated in any assessment;
- There should be no use of violence, harassment, intimidation or undue force in connection with the assessment or implementation of a planned intervention; and,
- Developmental processes that infringe the human rights of any section of society should not be accepted.

### **3.4 Timing and social impacts**

Social impacts can vary in both time and space. It is therefore necessary to identify the different stages in the planning and decision-making process and consider how the social impacts associated with these stages may or may not differ. It is also important to note that the type of social information and the level of investigation required differ for each of the different stages in the project cycle. This issue is discussed in Section 4.

In terms of timing all projects and policies go through a series of phases, usually commencing with initial planning, followed by implementation (construction), operation and finally closure (decommissioning). The basic phases identified by Burdge (1995) and in the Guidelines and Principles for Social Impact Assessment (Inter-organizational Committee, 2003) are:

- Planning;
- Construction;
- Operation; and,
- Closure.

The activities, and hence the type and duration of the social impacts associated with each of these phases are likely to differ. It is therefore essential for the SIA to develop a timeline that represents the stages that the proposed project or intervention is expected to go through.

#### **Stage 1: Planning**

These include all activities that take place from the time the project or policy is conceived to the point that it is implemented. Social impacts usually commence on the day that the action is proposed and can be measured from that point forward. These impacts are linked to people's expectations and fears. In this way social impacts are very different to impacts on the biophysical environment in that they commence with the rumours and/or the announcement of a proposed project. They do not require the actual implementation of the project on the ground, as is the case with impacts on the bio-physical environment.

#### **Stage 2: Construction**

Once the decision is made to proceed, implementation and construction starts. For typical projects this can involve clearing of land, construction of access roads, development of services, creation of construction related business and employment opportunities, potential relocation of people, in-migration of workers etc. These changes all result in social impacts on the existing communities in the area. These impacts may result in friction between the locals and labourers, stress of relocation, increases or decreases in property prices, uncertainty about the future etc.

#### **Stage 3: Operation**

This stage occurs after construction is complete or the policy is fully operational. It is during this stage that communities adapt to the changes that have occurred and the potential long-term benefits of a project or policy can be or are realised. However, it is also at this stage that the potential expectations of communities or promises made by

policy makers and project proponents may fail to materialise. If this is the case then a feeling of resentment and anger may develop in the community.

#### **Stage 4: Closure**

Closure or decommissioning marks the end of a project. As in the planning stage, the social effects of closure begin when the intent to close is announced or rumours start to circulate. In some cases, such as the closure of a mine, it may be necessary to undertake a new SIA to identify and assess the potential social impacts associated with closure. For example in South Africa the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act, 2002, (Act No 28 of 2002) (MPRDA) requires the submission of a Social and Labour Plan as a prerequisite for the granting of mining or production rights. The Social and Labour Plan requires applicants for mining and production rights to develop and implement comprehensive Human Resources Development Programmes including Employment Equity Plans, Local Economic Development Programmes and Retrenchment measures and processes to provide mine workers with additional skills, save jobs and manage downscaling and/or closure.

### **3.5 Common EIA terms and concepts**

Common EIA terms and concepts used throughout this series of guidelines are contained in Appendix A.

## **4. THE ROLE AND TIMING OF SPECIALIST INPUT WITHIN THE EIA PROCESS**

The following generic principles apply to the involvement of specialists, including social assessment specialists, in the EIA processes:

- Involve and consult specialists at an early stage in the project planning process. This may assist to reduce or eliminate the need for unnecessary specialist involvement at a later stage in the project by avoiding or sufficiently reducing negative impacts that may otherwise require specialist assessment;
- Involve and consult specialists at an early stage in the EIA process to increase efficiency and effectiveness of their involvement and enhance the potential benefits associated with the proposed project;
- Maintain continuity of specialist involvement throughout the process (specialist involvement should add value to project planning and design);
- Support flexible, focused and appropriate involvement of specialists to provide adequate, relevant information to make informed decisions (i.e. the correct level of information should be supplied at the right time in the EIA process);
- Allow for greater involvement of specialists in the identification of key issues, over and above those identified through stakeholder engagement processes; and,
- Allow for efficient and effective interaction between specialists and the EIA practitioner, the project proponent, the authorities, other specialists on the EIA team and other interested and affected parties (I&APs) to improve the quality of the EIA process and outcomes and ensure that findings are informed by local and indigenous knowledge and experience.

The role and timing of specialist input within the broader EIA process involves a number of aspects that need to be considered, including:

- Whether, when and why specialist input is required – see Sections 5 and 6 and the *Guideline for determining the scope of specialist involvement in EIA processes*;
- What the scope of specialist input should be - see Section 8, 10 and 11; and,
- What level/intensity of specialist input is required – see Section 8.

The involvement of specialists should not be seen as an obstacle in the approval process. Specialist input, especially at the early stages of project planning, can play an important role in helping to identify potential “fatal flaws” and formulate practical design alternatives that enhance project benefits, as well as minimise negative impacts, and possibly even project costs. Depending on the nature of the project, the stage of project planning and the EIA process, the environmental context and the amount of available information, specialist involvement will vary in intensity (i.e. level of detail) and may include any or all of the following approaches:

- Provision of a specialist opinion or comment;
- Archival research and literature review;
- Detailed baseline survey (including site visit/s);
- Consultation and interviews; and,
- Preliminary identification and assessment of impacts and their significance.

A specialist’s role in the EIA process could be to assist with any or all of the following:

- Describing the affected environment;
- Describing the legal, policy and planning context;
- Identifying and responding to issues;
- Identifying alternatives;
- Identifying opportunities and constraints;
- Developing specialist terms of reference (TOR);
- Predicting and assessing impacts;
- Recommending management actions and monitoring programmes; and,
- Undertaking an independent peer review of specialist input.

Terms of reference for specialist involvement should, therefore, be appropriate to the purpose and intensity/scale of involvement and should be discussed and agreed between the EIA practitioner and the specialist (and the authority where relevant). The *Guideline for determining the scope of specialist involvement in EIA processes* provides more detailed guidance on the role and timing of specialist input and provides a generic approach that can be used to determine the need for specialist involvement. It also clarifies the responsibilities amongst the different role-players, as well as prerequisites for specialists to provide effective, efficient and quality input.

Table 1 below outlines the social specialist’s potential areas of involvement in the EIA process.

### **Pre-application Planning and Screening Stage**

As indicated in the table there is considerable scope for the proponent of a development to involve specialists in the early pre-application planning stage of the project. This involvement is before the EIA process commences. The Screening process should also assess the need for an EIA. The advantages of involving specialists at this stage in the

planning process is that key issues likely to be raised during the EIA process can, in some instances, be addressed in the early planning stages of the project. It can also create an opportunity to identify measures that would enhance the potential benefits and incorporate these into the planning and design process. Input during the Screening Stage can also assist with the early identification and preliminary assessment of suitable alternatives. At this early stage in the EIA process alternatives that are likely to have a high social impact can be identified and discarded.

In terms of social impacts the involvement of social specialists in the early pre-feasibility stage of the project can assist in assessing the fit of the proposed development with relevant legal and planning requirements. They can further assist with the identification of potentially vulnerable communities that may be affected by the proposed development and ways in which these impacts can be avoided or mitigated in the early planning stages. Early input can also identify ways in which the potential benefits of the proposed development can be enhanced. However, in order to provide this input at an early planning stage the social assessment specialist will need to have a good understanding of the project and the socio-economic conditions of the affected environment (See Section 9.1 and 9.2).

### **Scoping Stage**

During the Scoping Stage the social assessment specialist can assist in the identification of key social issues that are likely to require more detailed assessment. This should be done in consultation with the EIA practitioner whose responsibility includes sourcing information on issues from interested and affected parties (I&APs), authorities, the proponent and other sources. The identification of social issues would be informed by the social assessment specialists experience and ability to assess and understand social systems. Experience with similar projects can also enable the specialist to identify social issues that are likely to develop that may not have been identified by the public and other interested and affected parties. In this regard the social assessment specialist must play an active role in identifying social issues and not rely solely on the issues identified by the public.

It is also important to note that the public participation that is undertaken as part of the Scoping Stage differs significantly from the consultation undertaken as part of the SIA. The aim of the public consultation process undertaken during the Scoping Phase is to inform the interested and affected parties of the proposed development and provide them with an opportunity to identify key issues and concerns that need to be assessed by the EIA. The typical format for this interaction includes public meetings, advertisements in local newspapers, workshops and open houses. The focus of the consultation process that takes place as part of the SIA process is on social issues. This requires in-depth one-on-one interviews with the affected stakeholders, focus group meetings, questionnaire surveys etc.

The social assessment specialist should also provide guidance on what issues do not require further assessment beyond the Scoping phase. This is often more difficult than identifying issues, particularly given that little may be known about impacts at a scoping level. When providing this input the specialist needs to exercise caution and should only recommend that an issue not be assessed further if they are confident that it will have little bearing on the project decision. For issues that require further assessment, the social assessment specialist should, in general, discuss and agree on the terms of reference for further social input with the EIA practitioner. In terms of timing the social

assessment specialist should not engage with the interested and affected parties until the first Scoping meeting has been held and the public have been made aware of the proposed project and the EIA process.

### **Impact Assessment Stage**

Once the Scoping Stage is complete, the social assessment specialist may be required to undertake a more detailed impact assessment of key issues that were unable to be addressed during the Scoping Stage. This includes the assessment of the nature, extent, duration, magnitude, probability and significance of impacts, as well as providing recommendations for mitigation and management actions that aim to avoid or minimize negative impacts and enhance project benefits. The terms of reference for specialist involvement should be appropriate to the purpose and intensity/scale of involvement and should be discussed and agreed between the EIA practitioner and the specialist (and the authority where relevant). The terms of reference should indicate how and to what level of detail the social assessment specialist will consult with the communities and individuals affected by the project. Although they are seldom initiated, the social specialist should also develop a Social Monitoring and Evaluation Programme to assess if the impacts that were predicted materialize and if the mitigation measures recommended proved to be effective. The development of a Monitoring and Evaluation Programme should be considered for all large projects that have the potential to impact on the social environment. In some instances the Monitoring and Evaluation Programme can be listed as a condition in the Record of Decision (RoD).

**Table 1: SIA specialist involvement in the EIA process**

<b>Stage of EIA</b>	<b>Role of social assessment specialist</b>	<b>Level of detail required</b>
Pre-application Planning Stage	Preliminary identification of social issues, advise on potential negative and positive social impacts and their implications, and comment on potential alternatives	Low – Medium: This would involve initial overview of the project, the social environment and screening of potential key issues.
Scoping Stage	Assist with identifying potential social issues, respond to those that can be addressed without further assessment and advise on those needing further investigation, help to develop terms of reference of SIA.	Medium: This would involve a follow up of the initial work carried out in the pre-application stage and may include interviews with key informants.
Impact Assessment Stage	Undertake SIA and identify and assess social impacts, recommended measures to enhance positive impacts and avoid/mitigate negative impacts.	High: This would involve undertaking a full SIA.
Monitoring and Evaluation Stage	Develop Monitoring and Evaluation Programme	Medium: This would involve using the findings from the SIA to inform the development of a Monitoring and Evaluation Programme.

## **PART B: TRIGGERS AND KEY ISSUES POTENTIALLY REQUIRING SPECIALIST INPUT**

This part of the guideline looks at the triggers and key issues potentially requiring input from social assessment specialists into the EIA process.

### **5. TRIGGERS FOR SPECIALIST INPUT**

A 'trigger' means a characteristic of either the receiving environment or the proposed project that indicates that the potential impact on the social environment is likely to be a 'key issue' and may require the involvement of an appropriately qualified and experienced specialist. Legal requirements of existing and future legislation may also trigger the need for specialist involvement. However, these aspects are not covered in this guideline.

Input from a social assessment specialist is required if the potential social impacts associated with the project are likely to influence the decision as to whether or not a project is desirable on balance and/or influence the development path selected for the project. However, the majority, if not all, projects are likely to have some impact on the social environment. Hence, all projects will have social implications in some form or another. While larger projects tend to have a greater impact (positive and negative) on the social environment this does not mean that smaller projects do not require specialist social assessments.

As indicated above, there are considerable benefits associated with involving specialists in the early pre-application planning stage of the project. These include identifying potential triggers at the outset of the EIA process. This represents a proactive as opposed to reactive approach to identifying social issues. In terms of the actual EIA process the Scoping phase is where the key issues, including social issues, are identified and the need for a specialist social assessment is triggered. Whether these should be assessed and the level of detail required needs to be determined in discussion between the EIA practitioner, the authorities and the social assessment specialist. Given that the majority, if not all projects impact in the social environment, it is advisable that some form of Baseline Social Survey be undertaken as part of the Screening/Scoping phase regardless of whether or not a specialist SIA is required or not. The level of detail would be determined by the nature of the project and the affected social environment. The information contained in a Baseline Social Survey provides the proponent, EIA practitioner and the authorities with an overview of the socio-economic conditions in the area and an indication of the potential social benefits and risks that are likely to be associated with the proposed development.

It is also important for the SIA specialist to strike a balance between providing relevant information to decision-makers and interested and affected parties, while at the same time avoiding the need to undertake unnecessary studies. In this regard the SIA specialist must be guided by the information collected during the Baseline Social Survey, his/her experience and the nature of the concerns raised by the community during the Scoping Process.

The need for specialist social input as part of an EIA process is also a function of the nature of the receiving environment and the type of project. The following indicators can be used to identify the need for input from a social assessment specialist:

### **The nature of the receiving environment**

- Areas containing vulnerable communities;
- Areas with high poverty and unemployment levels;
- Areas where livelihoods depend on existing social relationships and income-generating patterns;
- Areas where access to services, mobility and community networks are affected;
- Areas where local livelihoods depend on access to and use of environmental resources and services;
- Areas of important tourism or recreation value; and,
- Areas where the existing character and “sense of place” will be altered.

### **The type of project**

- Large, high intensity type projects, such as large infrastructure and civil projects;
- Projects conceived because of their perceived strategic importance, such as new roads, ports, industrial development areas etc;
- Linear projects, such as roads, pipelines, canals, power lines etc;
- Projects requiring a large workforce relative to the size of the existing workforce in the area, such as roads, dams, etc;
- Projects that are likely to impact on livelihood strategies, such as mines, irrigation schemes etc;
- Projects that represent a significant change in land use from the prevailing use, such as golf course estates; and,
- Land uses that are in conflict with the existing spatial development frameworks and vision for the area.

The nature of the project and the receiving environment will have a significant bearing on the social impacts that are likely to arise and the approach to the SIA. These differences are likely to be further highlighted by projects affecting urban and rural communities.

For example, in a rural community whose livelihoods are based on agriculture the key social issues associated with a road project are likely to be linked to loss of homesteads, arable fields, crops and dams. In addition, the road may also impact on natural resources that are important to their livelihoods, such as forests, rivers and wetlands. The road may also impact on social networks and access to services by creating a barrier that divides the community. The presence of construction workers also poses a number of potential social risks for the affected community.

In the case of an urban community, the key impacts are likely to be associated with noise and dust during the construction phase, and noise from increased traffic volumes during the operational phase. Access to community facilities and the impact on social networks may also represent potential issues of concern. These differences highlight the importance of the understanding the local social environment when it comes to identifying and assessing the social impacts. In order to gain this insight requires a

Baseline Social Survey to be undertaken followed up with interviews with the affected individuals, households and communities.

## **6. KEY ISSUES REQUIRING SPECIALIST INPUT**

### **6.1 Key objectives of Social Impact Assessment**

As indicated in Section 3.2 SIAs should enable the authorities, project proponents, individuals, communities and organisations to understand and be in a position to identify and anticipate the potential social consequences of the implementation of a proposed policy, programme, plan or project. The SIA process should also alert communities and individuals to the proposed project and possible social impacts, while at the same time allowing them to assess the implications and identify potential alternatives. The assessment process should also alert proponents and planners to the likelihood and nature of social impacts and enable them to anticipate and predict these impacts in advance so that the findings and recommendations of the assessment are incorporated into and inform the planning and decision-making process.

Given South Africa's developmental context the SIA process should also include a commitment to:

- The principles of sustainable development and social sustainability;
- Vulnerable groups;
- Meeting basic needs and services;
- Livelihood strategies;
- Fairness and equity;
- Social justice;
- Openness and participation; and,
- Accountability.

Based on the core values and principles the SIA process should seek to:

- Identify and assess the gender aspects of impacts;
- Assess the proposed development in terms of its fit with the relevant legislative, policy and planning requirements;
- Acknowledge and value the existence of spiritual worldviews and the existence of sacred places;
- Acknowledge and value cultural diversity and differing value systems between and within cultures;
- Identify and assess the factors that contribute to the overall quality of life (social well-being) of people not just their standard of living;
- Identify and assess the needs of vulnerable, at risk, groups and/or ethnic minorities or indigenous peoples;
- Identify and assess impact equity. Social assessments should seek to clearly identify which individuals, groups, organisations and communities stand to benefit from the proposed intervention and those that stand to be negatively affected. In so doing the assessment must identify and emphasize vulnerable and underrepresented groups;
- Identify and assess social relationships and networks within the affected community;
- Identify and assess community attitudes towards the project and community

cohesion;

- Recognise that social, economic and biophysical systems and impacts are inextricably interconnected. Social assessments therefore, need to identify and understand the impact pathways that are created when changes in one domain trigger impacts across other domains;
- Acknowledge and incorporate local knowledge and experience into the assessment process;
- Identify and assess developmental opportunities and not merely the mitigation of negative or unintended outcomes;
- Address poverty reduction and seek to improve the position of the worst-off members in society;
- Identify and assess second and higher order impacts and cumulative impacts;
- Form an integral part of the development and planning process and inform all stages of the process, from inception to decommissioning and closure; and,
- Identify and assess alternatives.

The role of the SIA process should therefore extend beyond the ex-ante (in advance) prediction of social impacts to include issues related to the empowerment of local people, gender issues, minority groups, capacity building, equity, development and poverty reduction.

## **PART C: PLANNING AND CO-ORDINATING**

Once the need for the specialist social assessment has been determined, the scope of specialist input needs to be clarified through discussions between the EIA practitioner, the specialist, the proponent and the decision-making authority. This part of the guideline covers the choice of an appropriate specialist, and the negotiation process leading to sound terms of reference (TOR) for that specialist. Appendix B outlines generic TOR for the specialist social assessment.

### **7. QUALIFICATIONS, SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED**

The social assessment specialist study should be conducted by specialists that have developed a substantial base of knowledge in the field of social impact assessment carried out within the ambit of EIAs. The lead specialist should ideally have a recognized degree in the social sciences - preferably to a Masters level or higher - as well as several years of experience. For less complex projects, an Honours level degree in social studies with demonstrated experience in project evaluation would also suffice. In addition to qualifications and experience, the specialist should also enjoy good standing among his/her peers in the social assessment community.

In addition to the above, the specialist should:

- Be familiar with the EIA process and relevant legislation pertaining to EIAs;
- Be familiar with the international and local literature on SIA and SIA methodologies;
- Be familiar with the assessment criteria commonly used in EIA to assess and evaluate impacts;
- Be competent at interpreting and evaluating information and answering the "so what" and "to whom" questions relevant to EIA decision-making, rather than simply providing descriptive information;
- Understand the linkages between ecological, economic and social systems and the complex causal mechanisms that produce social impacts;
- Be familiar with the local conditions and social structures;
- Be able to think beyond his/her immediate discipline and interpret how the findings of other specialist studies impact on the social environment;
- Have good knowledge relating to assessment techniques and to relevant legislation, policies and guidelines; and,
- Be independent (i.e. the specialist should not benefit financially from the approval of the proposed development by the authorities).

### **8. DETERMINING THE SCOPE OF SPECIALIST INPUTS**

The scope of the specialist input needs to be clarified through discussion between the EIA practitioner, the specialist, the proponent and, possibly, the relevant authorities. For this it is important that the participants in this discussion have a common understanding of the commonly used (and confused) EIA process terms (Appendix A). Sections 8.1 – 8.9 provide a brief overview of elements that should be discussed and agreed upon at the outset of the specialist's involvement in the EIA process and in drafting the TOR. Supplementary generic guidance is provided in the *Guideline for determining the scope*

*of specialist involvement in EIA processes.* In complex and/or controversial projects, key stakeholders should preferably review the draft TOR for specialists before they are finalized. Alternatively, the TOR for specialists should be evaluated by an independent reviewer.

When developing the TOR the social assessment specialists should inform the EIA practitioner that the typical technocratic assessment criteria used in the EIA process, namely, nature, extent, duration, intensity, probability and significance, do not, in many cases, lend themselves to assessing social impacts.

## **8.1 Identifying and responding to issues**

As indicated in Section 4, specialist input, especially at the early stages of project planning, can play an important role in helping to identify potential “fatal flaws” and formulate practical design alternatives that enhance project benefits, as well as minimise negative impacts, and possibly even project costs. At this early planning stage the specialist is also in a position to identify key issues that are likely affect the projects. The social assessment specialist can and should play an active role in identifying issues that need to be assessed.

The identification of issues by the social assessment specialists is guided by:

- His or her expert opinion and understanding of the local environment and proposed development;
- Experience with similar projects (Comparative approach);
- The issues identified during the Scoping process and reflected in the Scoping Report; and,
- The issues identified during the consultation process carried out as part of the SIA process.

In terms of responding to these issues the social assessment specialist should determine:

- Whether the issues raised through the scoping process are valid in the context of the proposed project, and need to be addressed further. The specialist is not necessarily required to assess each issue raised during scoping; a response or a comment on why the issue is not relevant or does not need to be assessed further may suffice in some cases. The specialist must, however, give sound reasons to support his/her conclusions;
- Whether there is sufficient information to predict the likely significance of key issues and associated impacts. If not, what additional information should be gathered;
- Whether additional key issues need to be considered (i.e. issues that were not raised by stakeholders through the scoping process). The specialist must provide clear reasons for including any additional issues in the EIA process. As indicated above, the SIA requires detailed public consultation that extends beyond the public consultation undertaken as part of the Scoping study;
- Where there is sufficient reliable information, the SIA specialist must determine:
  - Whether or not it can be reliably concluded that impacts could be avoided either by amending the project proposal, pursuing alternatives, and/or by appropriate

- mitigation and management actions. In this instance the specialist should provide sound motivation and justification for his/her conclusions. There would then not be a need to assess these issues further in the impact assessment phase and the involvement of the social assessment specialist/s would be confined to outlining the required mitigation measures and management plan. However, these conclusions cannot be made in the absence of a Baseline Social Survey of the affected area. This information provides the study with the required information of the affected community and the potential threats and opportunities associated with the project. Therefore, some form of assessment is required before such conclusions can be made;
- Whether or not the issues are potentially significant, and/or the issues and associated impacts cannot be avoided. In this instance the specialist must assess the scope of work required and assist with developing the terms of reference for specialist social assessment study required during the impact assessment phase.

## **8.2 Establishing appropriate time and space boundaries**

Social impacts can vary in both time and space. It is therefore necessary to identify the different stages in the planning and decision making process and consider how the social impacts associated with these stages may or may not differ. As indicated in Section 3.4, social impacts are unique in that they manifest themselves with the introduction of information into a system. Therefore, one of the first steps in the social assessment process is to develop a timeline that represents the stages that the project is expected to go through. Linked to this is the spatial boundary of the study area. The key stages that need to be considered are:

- Planning;
- Construction;
- Operation; and,
- Closure.

In most EIA processes the focus of the SIA tends to be on the Construction and Operation phase of the project. However, it is also important for the SIA to identify and assess potential issues that may lead to social impacts during the planning stage of the project. These include looking at how the project was announced to the public etc. In many private development projects the initial marketing of the project frequently takes place before the EIA process is initiated and/or is completed. This can undermine the confidence of the public in the EIA process and lead to social tension and resentment.

*The Provincial Guidelines for the Development of Golf Courses, Golf Estates and Polo Fields in the Western Cape (2005)* indicate that It is not ideal for applicants to undertake commercial advertising (i.e. advertising that specifically refers to the sale of plots/erven) until all authorisations have been obtained. However, any pre-sales advertisements, whether in the press or on-site, should be clear and unambiguous with regard to the approval status of the proposed development.

In some instances a separate SIA may also be required to assess the potential impacts associated with the closure of a project. The construction phase typically gives rise to intense impacts of a short-term nature while the operation phase typically creates

medium to long-term impacts, possibly, of a lower intensity than those associated with the construction phase. The closure phase varies in its impacts. However, it is important to recognize that this may not apply to all projects. For example, in-migration of job seekers during the construction phase may result in medium to long-term impacts (both negative and positive).

The spatial extent and duration of social impacts will depend on:

- The size and nature of the project; and,
- The affected social environment.

The potential impacts associated with large projects, such as a new road, port or industrial development zone, are likely to extend beyond the local setting and have both regional and national implications. However, all projects regardless of their size usually result in local impacts. In most instances it is the community in the immediate vicinity of the project who tend to be the most affected. Likewise, it is often the local community that stand to gain most from benefits such as employment opportunities. The impacts at the local level, therefore, represent the most important social impacts that need to be identified and addressed in the SIA. The key focus of the SIA is therefore on the impacts at the local individual, household and community level. However, the SIA must also investigate and assess the potential for impacts to manifest themselves at a regional and or national level.

### **8.3 Clarifying appropriate development alternatives**

Ideally specialists should be involved in the identification of potential alternatives during the early planning stages of the project. If this is not possible then they should provide input during the screening and scoping phase of the EIA process. The purpose of including alternatives in the EIA is to identify and evaluate alternate actions that accomplish similar goals and promote sustainable development. In this regard the specialist should assist the project proponent to identify a range of viable alternatives that, from a social perspective, would enhance benefits and/or prevent significant negative impacts. Alternatives considered in the EIA process can include:

- Project alternatives;
- Location and/or routing alternatives;
- Layout alternatives;
- Process and/or design alternatives;
- Scheduling alternatives; and,
- “No go” alternative.

Any development proposal may include a range of possible alternatives from some or all of these various categories of alternatives. The “no-go” alternative in EIA processes provides a benchmark against which to evaluate potential impacts of the proposed project alternatives.

In terms of social issues the identification of alternatives will be informed by the nature and setting of the project. This will require reference to the information collected as part of the Social Baseline Survey. However, in some instances the information from the Baseline Survey may not provide the required information. In such cases a preliminary social survey, including interviews and workshops, may be required. The approach to

identifying potential alternatives should also be guided by the principles that underpin SIA, including:

- The fit with key legislative, planning and policy requirements;
- An understanding of the local livelihood strategies and social needs;
- The need to enhance potential social benefits associated with the proposed development, specifically for vulnerable members of the community;
- The need to minimize the potential negative social impacts associated with the proposed development, specifically for vulnerable members of the community;
- The potential gender and equity implications of the proposed project; and,
- The potential impact on community integrity, well-being and social diversity.

The public are also involved in the identification of alternatives. These alternatives must be evaluated by the SIA specialist.

#### **8.4 Establishing environmental and operating scenarios**

Scenarios are plausible future environmental or project operating conditions that could influence the outcomes of the impact prediction and assessment process. While scenario planning cannot predict the future it does provide a tool that enables planners to identify potential outcomes that are likely to result from a given combination of factors.

Social environments are dynamic environments that have the ability to adapt and respond to changes. The typical technocratic assessment criteria used in the EIA process namely, nature, extent, duration, intensity, probability and significance, do not always lend themselves to assessing social impacts and the ability for social systems to respond and adapt to changes. This hampers the ability to accurately predict social impacts. However, there are a number of economic, institutional, political and environmental scenarios that are relevant to the social assessment process. As in the case of the impacts, the extent and significance of these scenarios will depend on the local social environment and the livelihood strategies of the affected individuals and communities.

The economic, institutional, political and environmental scenarios that are relevant to the social assessment specialist may include:

##### **Economic scenarios**

- Change in economic strategies, policies and initiatives for the area;
- Change in interest, inflation and exchange rates;
- Change in modes of production;
- Changes in property values;
- Change in raw material prices;
- Change in food prices; and,
- Change in fuel prices.

##### **Institutional and political**

- Change in political leadership and systems;
- Change in local, provincial and national government structures and institutions;
- Change in access to power and democratic rights; and,
- Change in political freedom and access to basic rights.

### **Environmental scenarios**

- Change in quality and supply of environmental services and goods;
- Change in access to natural resources and ownership patterns;
- Change in climate and rainfall patterns; and,
- Change in soil fertility.

### **8.5 Addressing direct, indirect and cumulative impacts**

The specialist social assessment should identify and assess the potential direct, indirect and cumulative impacts of a proposed activity. This requires the following:

- Conceptualisation of possible cause and effect pathways resulting from the proposed development;
- An understanding of the current socio-economic environment and future policies, plans, projects and activities in the area;
- An awareness of other threats or trends that could impact on individuals and communities in the area affected by the proposed development;
- An understanding of the likely resilience and status of affected communities and natural systems in the area affected by the proposed development;
- An understanding of broader strategic goals or targets for the area that would be affected by the proposed project;
- An understanding of peoples livelihood strategies and the linkages between the economic, ecological and social systems that operate in area that would be affected by the proposed project; and,
- An awareness of a range of potential economic, institutional, political and environmental scenarios that may impact on the social environment in the area.

The level of detail to which these should be considered will be influenced by the nature of the proposed project and the issues raised both during Scoping process and by the affected communities interviewed during the SIA. Where potentially significant cumulative effects are likely and cannot be addressed in the EIA, the specialist should alert the EIA practitioner and decision-maker/s to these effects and make explicit recommendations as to ways of addressing them (e.g. through a strategic environmental assessment or systems-based approach). Box 5 provides a definition of the different interpretations predicting different types of impacts.

## Box 5: Definitions and components of direct, indirect and cumulative effects

**Direct (or primary) effects** occur at the same time and in the same space as the activity. For example, the loss of habitat through mining or the creation of temporary employment opportunities on the construction site.

**Indirect (or secondary) effects** can occur later in time, or at a different place, from the causal activity, or as a result of a complex pathway. For example, the establishment of a factory can lead to the establishment of other businesses using the outputs of the factory.

**Cumulative effects** can be:

- Additive: the simple sum of all the effects (e.g. the accumulation of ground water pollution from various developments over time leading to a decrease in the economic potential of the resource);
- Synergistic: effects interact to produce a total effect greater than the sum of individual effects. These effects often happen as habitats or resources approach capacity (e.g. the accumulation of water, air and land degradation over time leading to a decrease in the economic potential of an area);
- Time crowding: frequent, repetitive impacts on a particular resource at the same time (e.g. multiple boreholes decreasing the value of water resources);
- Neutralizing: where effects may counteract each other to reduce the overall effect (e.g. infilling of a wetland for road construction, and creation of new wetlands for water treatment); and,
- Space crowding: high spatial density of impacts on an ecosystem (e.g. rapid informal settlement).

*Source: Adapted from Cooper, 2004.*

As indicated above, social environments are dynamic environments that have the ability to adapt and respond to changes. This not only creates challenges for the identification of direct impacts but also for cumulative impacts. The identification and assessment of cumulative impacts must therefore be undertaken with care and caution and requires an experienced social assessment specialist.

### 8.6 Selecting the appropriate approach

The approach to issues that is typically associated with specialist social assessment is outlined in Section 10.1. The key components elements of a SIA are illustrated in Box 6.

### **Box 6: Key components of a SIA**

- Describe and get an understanding of the proposed intervention (type, scale, location), the communities likely to be affected and determine the need and scope of the SIA;
- Collect baseline data on the current social environment and historical social trends;
- Identify and collect detailed data on the social impact assessment variables and social change processes related to the proposed intervention. This requires consultation with affected individuals and communities;
- Assess and document the significance of social impacts associated with the proposed intervention;
- Identify alternative and mitigation measures;
- Develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Programme and monitor and review the social effects, including a review of the SIA process itself.

*Source: Adapted from Burdge, 1995.*

### **8.7 Clarifying the timing, sequencing and integration of specialist inputs**

The timing of specialist input into the EIA process is covered in Section 4. In terms of interacting with other specialists, this should be facilitated by the EIA practitioner so as to ensure that the findings of each study are integrated into the overall assessment process. The social assessment specialist should also identify which specialists studies are likely to have a bearing on the SIA and ensure that he/she is aware of the key findings of these studies. Typical specialist studies that are likely to have a bearing on the SIA include:

- Economic assessment;
- Heritage Assessment;
- Visual Assessment; and,
- Specialist studies linked to natural resources and productive assets, such as soil and agricultural potential.

### **8.8 Ensuring appropriate stakeholder engagement**

Consultation with affected individuals, households and communities is a key component of SIA. However, many practitioners confuse public participation undertaken during the Scoping Stage of the EIA with SIA. The aim of the public participation undertaken during the Scoping Stage is to inform the interested and affected parties of the proposed development and identify key issues. This process does not measure and assess social impacts in advance of a project development or policy change (Burdge, 2002). The engagement required to measure and assess social impacts requires more in depth consultation with the affected parties. The affected parties are those individuals, households, communities, groups, institutions, etc, who feel that they will be affected in some way by the proposed development, either negatively or positively.

The TOR for the SIA should clearly indicate the approach to be adopted for engaging the

interested and affected parties. This requires that the person responsible for developing the TOR has a good understanding of the social assessment techniques. The SIA Report should also outline how the interested and affected parties were consulted. The various approaches for engaging with the affected stakeholders are described in Section 10.1.3.

### **8.9 Clarifying confidentiality requirements**

Issues of confidentiality need to be discussed by the proponent, EIA practitioner and social assessment specialist at the outset of the study and specified in the terms of reference where relevant. They may relate to the proponent's need to keep commercial information about the proposed project confidential. The need for confidentiality may further only apply to a particular phase of the project. For example, in the pre-application planning phase, confidentiality may be required to avoid creating undue expectations or pre-empting activities which could have a major impact on the proposed project.

In some instances the confidentiality of the interested and affected parties may also need to be considered. Such cases may arise when the interested and affected parties interviewed by the SIA specialist may feel that they may be threatened by other members of the community, the proponent and/or the authorities. In such case it may be necessary for the SIA specialist to protect the identity of the informants.

## **PART D: PROVIDING SPECIALIST INPUT**

This part of the guideline provides guidance for providing specialist input, as well as identifying the information required by specialists.

### **9. INFORMATION REQUIRED TO PROVIDE SPECIALIST INPUT**

#### **9.1 Relevant project information**

The project information required by the social assessment specialist from the proponent and/or the EIA practitioner includes:

- A detailed description of the proposed development, including:
  - The geographic location of the development;
  - The type and size of development proposed and its components, number of units, infrastructure and services etc;
  - The spatial extent of the proposed development;
  - The current land use and zoning for the affected property; and,
  - The surrounding land uses.
- The estimated capital expenditure and an indication of where goods and labour will come from;
- Need and desirability of the project as motivated by the proponent;
- Capacity of the local authority to provide services for the project (water, sewage and electricity);
- Information on the number of direct employment opportunities associated with the construction and operational phase of the project;
- Breakdown of the job categories and associated skills requirements during the construction and operational phase of the project;
- Indication of the timing of the construction and operational phase of the project;
- Information on empowerment, training and capacity development components associated with the proposed development;
- Indication of the target market for the proposed development; and,
- Potential alternatives.

Additional information may be needed from the proponent depending on the nature of the project. It is up to the specialist to determine what other information would be useful based on his/her understanding of the analysis that is required and request it from the proponent, via the EIA practitioner.

#### **9.2 Information describing the affected environment**

A basic understanding of the existing baseline socio-economic conditions is an essential prerequisite before undertaking a SIA. This information should be collected at the outset of the study as part of a Social Baseline Survey. This baseline information provides the social impact practitioner with the required information on the key social and economic characteristics of the area/region and a profile of the affected community. The baseline

information can also be used to identify the needs of the affected individuals, communities, organisations and institutions. The typical socio-economic baseline information that should be collected is listed in Box 7. This information can be obtained from existing literature, government sources and reports, and consultation with experts and the community. The baseline data should also be used to inform the design of the public involvement process and the identification of potential alternatives.

The baseline data from secondary sources should also be supplemented by a site visit to the area at the outset of the study. In this regard a few key interviews and simple observations can clarify and illuminate which aspects are essential to an understanding of the social environment. A site visit is also essential to ensure that the baseline data is still relevant. In some instances the baseline data may be out of date and therefore unreliable.

### **Box 7: Typical social and economic baseline information**

- Social and economic characteristics of the affected area;
- Demographic profile of the area (population numbers, race, age, gender, income, education and employment levels etc);
- Policy and planning framework for the site and surrounds (see below);
- Social and economic trends (historic and current) in the affected area;
- Social and economic drivers, both current and historical, in the affected areas, including key economic sectors;
- Social context of how people run their lives and the key factors that affect them on a day-to-day basis (livelihood strategies);
- An understanding of social networks, intra- and inter-household, community and extend support systems affected by the proposed development;
- Institutional arrangements, structures and capacity of the local authorities;
- An understanding of the institutional, local leadership and other power relationships that may be affected by the development;
- Level of services (housing, water, electricity, schools, clinics, policing etc) and current state of infrastructure in the area;
- Social and economic initiatives and opportunities;
- Local, regional and national social and economic policies, programmes, and plans affecting the area;
- Individuals, communities, organisation's and institutions who are likely to be affected by the project/plan/policy, with specific emphasis on vulnerable individuals, communities, organisation's and institutions;
- Land uses and ownership patterns in the area;
- Use and access to natural resources and livelihood strategies, especially in rural areas; and,
- Cultural beliefs and value systems.

In addition to this information the study should also include:

- Contextual maps and aerial photographs indicating the location of the site and the nature of the surrounding land uses and activities; and,

- Zoning and land use maps of the area.

Census data and household survey data can be used to construct this profile supplemented by information from Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) and other relevant local, provincial and national policy documents (See Section 10.1.3). Other sources of information include academic studies conducted in the area and reports. Information can also be requested or verified (in the case of older data) with the help of municipal and provincial officials involved in economic development and land use planning. In the case of large projects that will have clear social impacts (positive and negative) a detailed profile of the socio-economic environment that is likely to be affected by the project is needed.

Data poor circumstances generally increase the difficulties associated with assessment. Box 8 below provides pointers on what to do in such circumstances.

**Box 8: What to do in data poor circumstances**

- Identify and clearly communicate information gaps, associated risks and uncertainties;
- Undertake a site visit to the area and interview key informants;
- If statistical data are not available, investigate the possibility of eliciting expert opinion. If this route is taken make sure that the experts you contact have no incentive to be biased and understand what you are asking. Try to get as many opinions as possible and exercise caution if they differ;
- Clearly spell out the assumptions that have been made and indicate what level of confidence is attached to them;
- Highlight the consequences of assumptions (which had to be made) being incorrect, as part of a sensitivity analysis; and,
- Do not be pressurised by EIA practitioners, proponents or decision makers to make predictions and pronouncements when levels of uncertainty are uncomfortably high. The primary role of the specialist is the provision of information that is as objective as possible, not the making of decisions.

**9.3 Legal, policy and planning context**

Legislation and policies reflect societal norms and values. The legislative and policy context therefore plays a critical role in identifying and assessing the potential social impacts associated with a proposed development. In this regard a key component of the SIA process is to assess the proposed development in terms of its fit with key legislation and planning documents. As such, if the findings of the study indicate that the proposed development does not conform to the principles and guidelines contained in the key legislation and planning documents and there are no significant or unique social opportunities created by the development, the development cannot be supported.

In order to assess the legal, policy and planning context the Social Baseline Survey must provide information on the legal, policy and planning framework for the site and the surrounding area. At a national level three major pieces of legislation that make

reference to social issues are the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the National Environmental Management Act and the National Water Act. Each of the acts contains rights, principles and objectives that underpin the notion of social sustainability and the need to assess social issues and impacts. In addition the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act and Development Facilitation Act (DFA) also have an important bearing on social issues. For more detailed information on the legal context refer to Section 2.

At a provincial, regional and local level the relevant provincial plans, district and local planning and development plans, such as the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) for the area, should be consulted and supplemented by Spatial Development Frameworks (SDFs) and other land use and economic development planning documents. Other key planning and policy documents in the Western Cape that should be reviewed include:

- Provincial Spatial Development Framework. Provincial Administration: Western Cape, (2005);
- Guideline for the Management of Development on Mountains, Hills and Ridges in the Western Cape. Western Cape Department of Environmental and Cultural Affairs and Sport, Directorate Environmental Management (April 2002);
- Guidelines for Resort Developments in the Western Cape. Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (December 2005);
- Provincial Guidelines for the Development of Golf Courses, Golf Estates and Polo Fields in the Western Cape (Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, 2005); and,
- Provincial Urban Edge Guideline. (Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, 2005).

It is also important to consult with the local municipal officials and other government departments responsible for land use planning, economic development, housing, social services, etc, in order to check which documents are of relevance. Policies or plans that provide a vision of the desired future state for the area within which the development is proposed should also be consulted in order to evaluate whether or not the proposed development contributes to or conflicts with this vision.

#### **9.4 Information generated by other specialists in the EIA process**

SIA has strong links with a wide range of specialist sub-fields involved in the EIA process including specialist economic, aesthetic, heritage, archaeological, traffic, noise, infrastructure and health impact assessments. Interaction with the specialists involved in these studies and a review of their findings forms a key part of the SIA. The nature of information required and level of detail will vary for each project depending on the type, scale and location of the proposed development and the issues that require assessment.

### **10. SPECIALIST INPUT TO IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDING MANAGEMENT ACTIONS**

As indicated in Section 3.4, social impacts differ from biophysical impacts in that they can result from the mere introduction of information into a community or organisation. Social impacts, therefore, do not require the actual physical implementation of the

proposed development. They can develop as a result of rumours about the proposed development. How information is managed and released into the public domain is therefore an issue that needs to be carefully considered by proponents and EIA practitioners. The social assessment specialist can also play an important role in advising the proponent and/or EIA practitioner on the potential implications of releasing information into a community. The social assessment specialist is therefore in a position to provide input at the early planning stage of the EIA process. The role and timing of input from the social assessment specialist in the EIA process is outlined in Section 4. This input could be relatively minor, in the form of a brief professional opinion, or a preliminary Social Baselines Survey with an associated written report, depending on the nature of the proposed project and the sensitivity and complexity of the receiving environment. In most instances, regardless of the final product and its level of detail, the conceptual thinking followed by any specialist should be similar.

As a general guide the specialist should:

- Consider the **full project cycle**;
- Answer the “**so what**” and “**to whom**” questions of probable impacts, i.e. what are the likely consequences of impacts? How severe would they be, and who would be affected by these impacts?;
- Predict, assess and evaluate potentially significant **direct, indirect and cumulative impacts**, both with and without management actions. The evaluation of significance should be linked to **thresholds of significance**;
- Assess and evaluate impacts for the **different alternatives** and for **different environmental and operating scenarios**, where appropriate;
- Consider not only impacts on the **affected site**, but also impacts **beyond the site boundaries**;
- Assess and evaluate any **opportunities and constraints** posed by the receiving environment/operating context on the proposed development.

### 10.1 Predicting potential impacts

The nature and severity of the impact will depend on the type, scale and location of the proposed development. Therefore, in order to identify and predict the potential impacts associated with a project the social assessment specialist requires a good understanding of the proposed project and the local baseline socio-economic conditions. The collection of baseline social data is therefore a prerequisite for any SIA. In addition to this information the social assessment specialist must interview key stakeholders and individuals from the affected community to assess how they will be affected by the proposed development. Public consultation is therefore a fundamental component on the SIA process. The techniques for interacting with the public are outlined in Section 10.1.3.

Once the social assessment specialist has collected the required baseline data and consulted with the affected parties he/she is in a position to undertake a SIA and identify and predict potential social impacts.

This section outlines:

- The key requirements of a SIA;

- The approaches to undertaking a SIA;
- Research techniques for collecting information for a SIA;
- Basic tips for researchers collecting information for a SIA; and,
- Social assessment variables and social change processes.

### **10.1.1 Key SIA requirements**

See Section 6.1.

### **10.1.2 Approaches to SIA**

Traditionally, there are two main approaches to SIA, the technocratic approach and participatory approach.

#### **Technocratic approach**

In the technocratic approach the social scientist remains a neutral observer of social phenomena. The assessment is based on the professional expertise of the specialist and his/her interpretation of the situation. A key assumption of this approach is that, given sufficient data, accurate predictions can be made by trained social scientists. (Becker, Harris, Nielsen & McLaughlin, 2004). The principle drive in this approach is to make top-down decisions based on expert knowledge within a formal and structured bureaucracy (Taylor *et al*, 2004).

#### **Participatory Approach**

The participatory approach incorporates the knowledge and experiences of individuals most affected by the proposed changes into the assessment process. The specialist in this approach acts as facilitator of knowledge sharing, interpretation and reporting of impacts. The participatory approach is therefore a process-oriented, bottom-up approach to identifying and assessing social impacts.

In most instances the approach to identifying and assessing social impacts involves a combination of the two approaches. This highlights the importance of using experienced social assessment specialists and public consultation.

### **10.1.3 Research techniques**

There are two basic research approaches to SIA, namely:

- The quantitative approach. This approach aims to measure the social world objectively, to test hypotheses and to predict outcomes. The approach essentially underpins the technocratic approach to SIA; and,
- The qualitative approach: This approach attempts to provide a more descriptive understanding of social conditions and how people live their lives.

Both these approaches are used in conducting a SIA. The major difference between the two approaches is linked to the collection and analysis of data. In the case of the quantitative approach secondary data, such as statistical census data, is used to provide an indication of the demographic structure of a community. The qualitative approach typically uses data collected from interviews and observations to gain insight into people's social structures and livelihood strategies. The combination of qualitative and

quantitative methods provides the SIA with a rich source of information on the affected community and individuals.

### **Quantitative techniques**

The focus of quantitative research is on the collection of data that is deemed to be representative data of a specific social environment or theme. This data can then be used to make inferred assumptions regarding the affected social environment. The most common and important quantitative technique used in SIA is the analysis of secondary data, specifically census data. This data is used to provide historic and demographic profiles, and can be used to provide extensive baseline information. Quantitative data can be obtained from a number of sources including:

- National census data;
- National and Provincial Departments, such as the Department of Housing, Department of Health, Department of Agriculture, Department of Economic Development etc;
- Integrated Development Plans (IDPs);
- Local Municipalities and departments within the Local Municipality such as Community Services, Engineering, Town Planning and Economic Development etc;
- Local police stations and crime statistics;
- Local hospitals and clinics;
- Local newspaper archives;
- Local libraries;
- Reports and studies on the area;
- Local Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and Community Based Organisations (CBOs);
- Universities and academics (published and un-published research papers and post graduate theses);
- Local Tourist Organisations and Information Centres;
- Local Business Organisations, and institutions such as WESGROW;
- Local Telephone Directory and Yellow Pages; and,
- The internet.

It is important to note that quantitative assessment of secondary data is not necessarily more “objective” than the analysis of data collected from interviews. In this regard the design and interpretation of quantitative data is an art form as much as qualitative research is.

### **Qualitative techniques**

The focus of qualitative research is on obtaining a greater depth of understanding of the affected social environment and the affected parties. In this regard qualitative research aims to solicit and develop an understanding of the many layers of meaning that underpin the social structures, networks and relationships within a community. Qualitative research attempts to identify and understand the complex social issues that cannot be easily quantified. The most common qualitative methods used include:

- Focus group interviews and workshops;
- Interviews (structured and semi-structured);
- Participatory Rural Appraisal;
- Household surveys; and,

- Ethnographic research (This approach is seldom used in SIAs undertaken for EIAs).

### **Focus group interviews and workshops**

The aim of Focus Groups is to gain insight into the shared and different perspectives of specific sectors and groups within a broader social grouping or community, specifically vulnerable groups such as women and the elderly. Focus Group meetings can be used in any community. They are also very effective for interacting with more “formal” social groups, such as political parties, officials, NGOs and CBOs. Generally Focus Group meetings take between 1 and 2 hours. Therefore, for good results adequate time must be allocated to the Focus Group meetings. Time also needs to be allocated for setting up the meetings, coordinating the participants and collating the comments. The interviewers who facilitate/manage Focus Group meetings must be skilled communicators and have the required social skills to interact with the respondents and make them feel relaxed and comfortable about identifying issues and concerns. Use of researchers who are fluent in the local language is critical. This approach is not intended to be statistically representative. Rather, it is a time- and cost-effective approach for collecting information for specialist social assessments conducted as part of the EIA process.

### **Interviews (structured and semi-structured)**

Interviews are a popular and highly effective tool for collecting information. They can be structured, semi-structured or casual. Semi-structured interviews are based on a set of pre-prepared questions and can be used to identify patterns and broad social themes while leaving some room for unexpected positions to be expressed. These interviews can be held with individuals or groups. Casual and unplanned contacts can also provide the SIA with valuable sources of information and insight.

Semi-structured interviews tend to take longer than in-depth, open-ended interviews. Data transfer and collation can also be time intensive, though less so than transcriptions. The interviewers involved in semi-structured interviews must be skilled communicators and have the required social skills to interact with the respondents and make them feel relaxed and comfortable about identifying issues and concerns. Use of researchers who are fluent in the local language is critical. Semi-structured interviews can be statistically representative and provide some indication of common themes/positions. Well-planned interviews are also a time- and cost-effective approach for collecting information for specialist social assessments conducted as part of the EIA process.

### **Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)**

PRA is a methodology that was developed in an attempt to empower communities to identify the key factors that affect their livelihoods, as opposed to consultants or researchers identifying the key issues themselves. The approach is aimed at empowerment as opposed to simply collecting data. The information collected is owned, analysed and used by local people rather than by outsiders.

As an approach PRA is largely aimed at use in developing countries and rural communities, especially where there is a high rate of illiteracy and limited sources of secondary data. Generally these methods take less time than survey research methods (less person hours). However, PRA requires quality, focused time and time must also be allocated for setting up the 2 to 3 hour appraisal session required. Good facilitation skills and an understanding of PRA methodologies are required. The researcher should also be able to interpret symbolic, highly coded research data, for example Social Maps, etc,

developed by the community. Use of researchers who are fluent in the local language is critical. PRA is not intended to be statistically representative. It can, however, establish some consensus of opinion. The PRA is a very effective approach for collecting the information required to assess livelihoods using the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (See Section 10.1.6).

Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) is similar to PRA. However, the focus of RRA is, as the term implies, the on data collection within a short period of time.

### **Household surveys**

The aim of household surveys is to collect statistically representative data on verifiable, quantifiable and un-contentious aspects of reality. There is a general belief that statistics have more political 'weight' than more qualitative research. However, in the case of SIA this is not always the case. As an approach household surveys tend to be time intensive and costly. However, the time and cost is dependant on the size of the survey sample and the number of fieldworkers employed. Fieldworkers can on average complete 5 – 8 questionnaires on a day (depending on scale). Data capturing and analysis is also time intensive. Household surveys require skilled survey designers and data analysts. Fieldworkers also need to be experienced and well briefed before they can undertake the surveys. As an approach, household surveys are intended to be statistically representative. Due to the time and cost constraints household surveys are usually only undertaken as part of larger EIA processes and do not lend themselves to smaller EIAs.

### **Ethnographic research**

This approach entails interviews and detailed participant observation. The aim is to gain in-depth insight into the social dynamics of the affected area. While ethnographic research generally takes less time than survey research, good quality data does require time to collect. This time is associated with undertaking in-depth interviews and observing the community. Time must also be allocated for the transcription and analysis of the data collected in the field. This component of the research usually takes as much time as the collection of the data and is often underestimated. The interviewers undertaking the ethnographic must be skilled communicators and also have excellent interpretative skills. A good interviewer should also have the social skills required to interact with the respondents and make them feel relaxed and comfortable about identifying issues and concerns. Use of researchers who are fluent in the local language is critical. This approach is not intended to be statistically representative and is generally more appropriate to larger, research-linked studies as opposed to EIAs, specifically smaller scale EIAs.

#### **10.1.4 Basic tips for SIA practitioners and researchers**

- Communities are not homogenous entities. They are made up of individuals who often have different worldviews and needs;
- Researchers should be aware that the mere fact that they are present in the community is an intervention itself. The community will become aware of a stranger in their midst, and this in itself can create social impacts;
- It is critical for the researcher to clarify his/her role and to explain what a SIA is, what the project entails and why they are there;
- The individuals interviewed must be treated with respect since they represent the key source of information;

- The researcher must guard against creating unrealistic expectations, and be sure that they understand the aim of the project and are familiar with its components;
- Researchers need to explore all the relevant dimensions of the social environment, not only those that are obvious and easily accessible;
- Assumptions about the needs of individuals and the community should never be made without being tested;
- Researchers need to be sensitive to multiple perspectives on reality. No single interviewee has a monopoly on truth about his/her community;
- Communities are often deeply divided along gender, age, class, ethnic, religious, occupation, and education lines, and this shapes the ways in which individuals and social groups perceive social reality. Researchers need to be sensitive to and aware of these issues, especially in South Africa given its history of racial segregation;
- Researchers should be sceptical about individuals who claim to speak on behalf of “the community” – this should alert the researcher to the need to consciously seek out alternative perspectives and information sources;
- Researchers need to find ways of dealing with gatekeepers and powerful individuals who may manipulate the social assessment process to further their own agendas and interests. This does not mean that they should be avoided, on the contrary, gatekeepers are often a very valuable source of information on community structures and power relationships;
- The social background of the researcher influences the nature of the research encounter. This needs to be taken into account when doing field research as well as during the analysis phase;
- What may seem to be “common sense” is often more complicated than it appears at first glance. Social reality is not always what it seems and the researcher must probe beyond the surface in order to gain an in-depth understanding of any given social situation;
- Research is seldom simply about collecting the “raw facts” and describing social reality. *The facts do not speak for themselves* and researchers have to become involved in social analysis and cultural interpretation;
- Research usually requires interpretative work in order to make sense of social reality. To make sense of this requires interpretation based on the context within which social action takes place;
- Understanding complex social realities can be like peeling off the many layers of an onion. The more you probe the more complex social reality becomes and the more one has to shed one’s preconceptions and prior understandings of the situation;
- Researchers need to investigate social situations from multiple perspectives, for instance from the angle of women, youth, elderly, educated and uneducated, the employed and the unemployed, etc;
- It is important to recognise the salience of power relations in shaping which versions of social reality count;
- Powerful, educated elites often dominate local development initiatives and researchers need to make sure that they understands these local dynamics;
- It is important to consciously seek out the views of marginalized and vulnerable individuals and social groups. For instance, in many rural villages in Africa it is the elderly, male cattle owners who are the most powerful and vocal community members. Poor, young women are generally disempowered and silenced. To access their perspectives requires conscious effort and strategising as the powerful individuals and groups will often conspire to prevent you from speaking to the less powerful citizens;

- It is important to recognise that community spokespersons do not necessarily represent everyone belonging to “the community”. The researcher needs to understand how the social, economic and education backgrounds of individuals shapes their capacity to represent communities;
- Researchers should be aware of the divergent interests and perspectives within any single community and seek to show how these differences impact upon any given social situation;
- Deep immersion in social contexts through participant observation, “hanging out” and informal conversations can reveal information that would not be accessible through formal survey questionnaires. Surveys and censuses are often viewed with distrust by poor people, who tend to view these forms of data gathering as bureaucratic instruments of state control, surveillance and domination;
- There is often a difference between what respondents say about their lives and what they do. Survey questionnaires seldom allow the researcher to probe these gaps. Semi-structured interviews combined with participant observation may be more useful methods for accessing such information;
- The impact of the researcher on the researched cannot be overestimated. In this regard there is a need for a reflexive approach to the research itself so that the researcher is able to anticipate his or her influence on the research process. For instance, if one is doing a survey in a drought prone area, the interviewee may understate livestock numbers and crop yields in order to qualify for drought relief or social welfare assistance;
- Interviewees often give the researcher what they think the latter wants to hear. For example, if a researcher claims that he/she is interested in investigating the impact of the adoption of progressive, modern farming methods, an interviewee may manipulate the interview situation in such a way as to convey the impression that he or she is a successful and “scientific” farmer;
- People often seek material or social advantage in their engagement with powerful outsiders such as researchers. The researcher needs to be aware of these dynamics in order not to be misled by respondents;
- Interviewees often have unrealistic expectations that the research will somehow benefit them. The researcher has an ethical obligation not to mislead people, especially in poor communities;
- Researchers have to make decisions as to whether or not they are prepared to take on the role of brokers, mediators and advocates for poor communities. Researchers are often called upon to take up such roles, each of which comes with advantages and drawbacks. What is clear, however, is that researchers should dispel any misconceptions of being detached, objective observers. Their presence in any research context directly impacts upon the research process and findings;
- Researchers must keep field notes that reflect their observations in the field. These observations are separate from the information collected from interviews and often provide important insights into the social structures and relationships within the affected community;
- Researchers must be objective and realistic about the promises made by proponents. In this regard researchers must question and assess the information presented by proponents to motivate for the project.

*Source: Adapted from S Robins personal communication, 2003.*

### **10.1.5 Social assessment variables and social change processes**

The aim of SIA is to identify and assess social impacts associated with a proposed activity. The process of identifying and assessing social impacts is aided by referring to the social assessment variables, or indicators, and social change processes.

#### **Social assessment variables**

The Inter-organizational Committee on Guidelines and Principles for Social Impact Assessment (2003) identifies a range of social variables. These variables, or indicators, can be used to identify potential areas where social impacts or changes may occur as a result of a proposed development. The variables are grouped under 5 categories, namely, population characteristics, community/institutional structures, political and social resources, individual and family level changes and community infrastructure needs. Box 9 lists the categories and associated variables.

These variables can in some instances be used as a checklist. However, while checklists can be useful they need to be used with care. There is a danger of SIA practitioners with limited training and/or expertise in the social sciences using the checklist instead of undertaking a proper consultation process. Also, consultants that use checklists may not properly think through the complex causal mechanisms that produce social impacts, especially the higher-order impacts or flow-on effects (Slootweg *et al.*, 2001). It is therefore important to remember that the issues to be considered in the SIA should be derived from the consultation process conducted as part of the study and not from a checklist.

However, a comprehensive list of impacts may increase awareness of the full range of social impacts, and may lead to improved assessments as a result. It is also important for practitioners to remember that most social impacts are situation specific and are therefore dependent on the social, cultural, political, economic, and historic context of the community in question, as well as the characteristics of the proposed project and of any mitigation measures implemented. These aspects cannot be addressed by referring to a checklist. This highlights the complexities and challenges facing SIA and the importance of detailed public consultation.

## **Box 9: Social assessment variables**

### **Population Characteristics**

- Population size density and change
- Influx and outflow of temporary workers
- Presence of seasonal (leisure) residents
- Relocations of individuals or families
- Racial and ethnic composition and distribution

### **Community/Institutional arrangements**

- Voluntary associations
- Interest group activity
- Size and structure of local government
- Employment/income characteristics
- Change in the commercial/industrial focus of the community;
- Local/regional/national linkages
- Employment equity of disadvantaged groups
- Historical experience of change

### **Political and social resources**

- Presence of outside agencies;
- Distribution of power and authority
- Inter-organisational cooperation
- Conflict between newcomers and long term residents
- Identification of stakeholders
- Interested and affected parties
- Leadership capabilities and characteristics

### **Individual and family changes**

- Perceptions of risk, health and safety;
- Displacement /relocation concerns;
- Attitudes towards policy/project;
- Disruption in daily living and movement patterns;
- Trust in political and social institutions;
- Introduction of new social classes;
- Residential stability;
- Alteration in family structures and social networks;
- Concerns about social well being;
- Change in leisure opportunities.

### **Community Resources**

- Change in community infrastructure
- Indigenous populations
- Changing land use patterns
- Effects on known cultural, historical, sacred and archaeological resources

*Source: The Inter-organizational Committee on Guidelines and Principles for Social Impact Assessment (2003)*

## **Social change processes**

Many social impacts are not in themselves “impacts” but change process that may lead to social impacts (Vanclay, 2002). For example the influx of temporary construction workers is in itself not a social impact. However, their presence can result in range of social impacts, such as increase in antisocial behaviour. The approach adopted by Vanclay stresses the importance of understanding the processes that can result in social impacts. It is therefore critical for social assessment specialists to think through the complex causal mechanisms that produce social impacts. By following impact pathways, or causal chains, and specifically, by thinking about interactions that are likely to be caused, the full range of impacts can be identified (Vanclay, 2002). The social change processes identified by Vanclay (2002) are listed in Box 10.

### **Box 10: Social Change Processes (Vanclay, 2002)**

- Demographic processes (Process that result in a change in the number and composition of the population);
- Economic processes (Processes that affect the way in which people earn a living and economic activities in the area);
- Geographical processes (Processes that result in a change of land use and land use patterns);
- Institutional and legal processes (Processes that result in a change in the role, capacity, functioning and activities of government (local, provincial and national) and other organizations);
- Empowerment processes (Processes that affect the ability of people to participate in and influence decision-making);
- Socio-cultural processes (Processes that affect the culture and value systems of communities and society).

The combination of the social assessment variables and social change process provides the social assessment specialist with a useful approach for identifying and assessing social impacts. However, it must be stressed that the effective identification and assessment of social impacts cannot take place in the absence of public consultation with the affected individuals and communities. While it is possible for experienced social assessment specialists to identify what the typical social impacts are likely to be based on his/her experience, it is not possible to comment on the extent and significance of these impacts without consulting with the affected parties. Vanclay (2003) also identifies different categories of social impacts. Projects can impact on one or a combination of these categories. These categories inform the social assessment and can enable the social assessment specialists to identify which individuals, households and sectors of the community will be affected and how. The categories are listed in Box 11.

## **Box 11: Categories of social impacts (Vanclay, 2003)**

### **Impacts on health and social well-being**

Impacts on health and well-being are linked to death, nutrition, actual and perceived health, mental health, fertility, future aspirations, feelings towards the project, including anxiety, uncertainty, etc.

### **Impacts on quality of the living environment**

Impacts on the quality of the living environment are linked to changes in physical quality, (such as exposure to noise, dust, risk, odour, etc.), leisure and recreation opportunities, changes in aesthetic quality and sense of place, changes in the availability and quality of housing, physical and social infrastructure (such public transport, libraries, clinics, schools, etc.), personal safety and exposure to risk and hazards, levels of crime and violence, etc.

### **Impacts on economic material well-being**

Impacts on economic and material well-being are linked to changes in workload, standards of living, economic prosperity and resilience, income; property values, employment, replacement cost of environmental functions and economic dependency etc.

### **Cultural impacts**

These impacts relate to changes in cultural values, violation of culture, the experience of being culturally marginalized, commercial exploitation of culture, loss or marginalisation of local language and loss of natural and cultural heritage etc.

### **Family and community impacts**

These impacts are linked to alterations in family structure, loss of community networks and support structures, obligations to family/ancestors, family violence, changes to community connectivity and sense of belonging, changes in community cohesion, social differentiation and inequity, social tension and violence, etc.

### **Institutional, legal, political and equity impacts**

Institutional, legal, political and equity impacts relate to the capacity of government agencies to handle workload generated by a project, the impact on the integrity of government agencies and absence of corruption and competence of agency, impact on legal and human rights and social justice, the impact on participation in decision making and access to legal advice and impact on fairness of distribution of impacts across the community.

### **Impacts on gender relations**

Impacts on gender relations relate to impacts on women's physical integrity and the ability to make decisions about their own bodies, impacts on the personal autonomy of women, the gendered division of labour and access to resources and facilities and the political emancipation of women.

### **10.1.6 Sustainable Livelihoods approach**

The “Sustainable Livelihoods” approach provides the social assessment specialist with a very useful approach for identifying and assessing key social impacts and issues. The approach focuses on the “assets” or “capital” that people have at their disposal to overcome their vulnerability to poverty. In doing so it considers both sustainability and vulnerability.

The sustainability livelihoods approach has five categories of capital or assets, namely:

- Natural capital. This refers to the natural resources stocks from which resource flows and services that are used for sustaining livelihoods are derived. For typical rural communities these would include land, water, forests, water, marine resources, etc;
- Human capital. This represents the skills, knowledge and health that enable people to sustain their livelihoods. At the household level human capital relates to the amount and quality of the labour available. This will vary from household to household depending on household size, skill levels, gender, age, education, health status, etc;
- Social capital. Social capital refers to the social resources that people utilize to sustain their livelihoods. These include community and family networks, membership of informal and formal groups and organisations etc. In poor areas these networks provide a very important safety net for the poor;
- Physical capital. This consists of the basic infrastructure and equipment required to sustain livelihoods. Physical capital would include shelter, buildings, roads, communication networks, etc;
- Financial capital. These are the financial resources that people use to sustain their livelihoods. There are two main sources of financial capital: available stocks in the form of cash, bank deposits, etc, or assets such as livestock. In rural and traditional societies livestock and other assets form the most important source of financial capital.

The five categories of “capital” or “assets” provide a useful guide or checklist for identifying and assessing social impacts, especially for interventions set in a rural environment. However, they are also relevant in urban environments. The five categories of capital or assets used in the sustainable livelihoods approach also lend themselves to identifying and assessing the social change processes and causal links between the proposed development and the affected communities well-being.

Dr S Malan has developed SIA assessment variables for the sustainable livelihood categories of Social, Human and Productive Capital (Combination of a Natural, Physical and Financial Capital) that have specific relevance to the South African social environment. These variables are listed in Appendix C.

### **10.2 Interpreting impact assessment criteria**

The typical impact criteria used in EIA processes are outlined in Box 12. These criteria provide the assessment process with a degree of consistency in reporting between the different specialist studies. However, social impacts do not in many cases lend themselves to the technocratic mechanistic approach adopted by traditional EIA assessment methods. Also, the assessment of significance must be guided by the

comments received from the affected parties themselves together with the professional judgement of the specialist. This highlights the need for experienced social assessment specialists.

Care therefore needs to be taken by the social assessment specialist when interpreting impact assessment criteria and reflecting their significance. While the use of assessment tables that list the criteria (contained in Box 12) do provide the EIA with an effective way of summarising and comparing the findings of specialist studies, these tables do not always provide the most appropriate way of presenting the findings of a SIA.

Where tables are used they should be accompanied by a qualitative description of:

- The nature of the impact;
- The affected parties;
- The likely consequences of the intervention on the affected parties; and,
- The social change process and the likely social implications.

The interpretation of social impacts is also complicated by the highly personal nature of such impacts. For example, the residential development of farmland may result in the loss of jobs for the affected farm workers. While the overall loss of jobs may be limited, for those individuals who stand to lose their jobs the impact is significant. This type of information is difficult to capture in a table that seeks to summarise data. Therefore social impact specialists should take care to ensure that the assessment of impacts takes into account:

- Impact equity, with a clear statement indicating who stands to gain and who stands to lose out; and,
- Vulnerable groups, with specific reference to how they will be affected by the proposed projects;
- Direct and Indirect impacts; and,
- Cumulative impacts.

## Box 12: Criteria used for the assessment of impacts

- **Nature of the impact** - This is an appraisal of the type of effect the activity would have on the affected environment. This description should include what is being affected and how.
- **Extent** - Here it should be indicated whether the impact will be:  
*local* extending only as far as the activity;  
will be limited to the *site and its immediate surroundings*;  
will have an impact on the *region*;  
will have an impact on a *national* scale; and/or  
will have an impact across *international* borders.
- **Duration** - Here it should be indicated whether the lifetime of the impact will be:  
*short term* (e.g. 0 – 5 years);  
*medium term* (e.g. 5 – 15 years);  
*long term* (where the impact will cease after the operational life of the activity, either because of natural process or by human intervention); or  
*permanent* where mitigation either by natural process or by human intervention will not occur in such a way or in such a time span that the impact can be considered transient.
- **Intensity** – Here it should be established whether the impact is destructive or benign and should be indicated as:  
*low*, where the impact affects the environment in such a way that natural, cultural and social functions and processes are not affected;  
*medium*, where the affected environment is altered but natural, cultural and social functions and processes continue albeit in a modified way; and *high*, where natural, cultural or social functions or processes are altered to the extent that it will temporarily or permanently cease.
- **Probability** – This should describe the likelihood of the impact actually occurring indicated as:  
*Improbable*, (where the possibility of the impact to materialize is very low either because of design or historic experience);  
*probable*, (where there is a distinct possibility that the impact will occur);  
*highly probable*, (where it is most likely that the impact will occur); or  
*definite*, (where the impact will occur regardless of any prevention measures).
- **Significance** – The significance of impacts can be determined through a synthesis of the aspects produced in terms of their nature, duration, intensity, extent and probability and can be described as:  
*low*, (where it will not have an influence on the decision);  
*medium*, (where it should have an influence on the decision unless it is mitigated); or  
*high*, (where it would influence the decision regardless of any possible mitigation).

Note that wherever possible, the specialist should refine and customize these criteria to his/her particular study (e.g. a positive impact of “high” significance is when the project could reduce local unemployment by 5% or more).

Source: Adapted from the criteria provided by Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 1998

### 10.3 Establishing thresholds of significance

Thresholds of significance define the level or limit at which point an impact changes from low to medium significance, or medium to high significance. These thresholds are often determined by current societal values or alternatively by scientific evidence (norms, etc.) that define what would be acceptable or unacceptable to society and may be expressed in the form of legislated standards, guidelines or objectives.

In the case of social impacts the establishment of thresholds of significance is guided by:

- The basic rights afforded to people in terms of South Africa's Constitution as set out in the Bill of Rights;
- The core values and principles that underpin SIA;
- The need to address the historic inequalities in South Africa;
- The need to create opportunities for the historically disadvantaged communities in South Africa; and,
- The significance attached to issues by the affected communities.

#### **10.4 Describing the distribution of impacts – beneficiaries and losers**

A key requirement of all SIAs is to assess impact equity and to identify those parties that stand to benefit and those parties that stand to be disadvantaged by the proposed project. In order to do this the SIA must:

- Describe the project and its components;
- Describe the socio-economic environment in which the project is located (socio-economic baseline data);
- Identify and assess the potential opportunities and threats to the community and individuals affected by the project;
- Identify vulnerable groups and beneficiaries; and,
- Assess impact equity.

The information required to undertake an assessment and describe the distribution of impacts is outlined in Section 10.1.

#### **10.5 Identifying key uncertainties and risks**

The specialist must identify and communicate any key uncertainties and risks associated with the accuracy of the findings of the social assessment, as well as of the proposed project. These uncertainties and risks should be clearly communicated in the SIA Report.

Sources of uncertainty and risk commonly associated with projects are linked to:

- Lack of adequate information at the household level;
- Creation of employment and business opportunities for members from the local, historically disadvantaged communities;
- Creation of training and capacity development opportunities for members from the local historically disadvantages communities;
- The influx of job seekers and construction workers to the area and the impact on services; etc; and,
- Impact on sense of place.

The employment, training and capacity building opportunities are linked to the construction and operational phase of the proposed development and the creation of potential downstream developments. While the majority of developments do create employment opportunities during the construction and operational phase, these

opportunities do not always accrue to members from the local community. This can be as a result of a lack of appropriate local skill levels or reluctance by the proponent to use local labour. It may therefore be difficult for the SIA to accurately predict the number of employment opportunities that will be taken up by members from the local community. This highlights the need for the SIA to identify mitigation measures aimed at enhancing potential local benefits and minimizing risks.

For projects that involve large civil components the influx of job seekers and construction workers is frequently identified as an issue of concern. However, it is usually impossible to quantify the number of job seekers and construction workers that will move into the area. In addition, the migration of people from the rural areas to urban centres is a normal trend in South Africa and other developing countries. These people are essentially job seekers whose influx into an area is not necessarily linked to a specific project or development. These uncertainties highlight the importance of developing and implementing an effective monitoring and evaluation programme, especially for large projects.

## **10.6 Justifying underlying assumptions**

The aim of a SIA is to identify and assess the impact of a planned intervention of the affected social environment. As indicated above, a key aspect of human behaviour and hence social assessment is the theory known as “the social construct of reality.” These constructs are frequently treated as perceptions or emotions, to be distinguished from “reality.” The “social construct of reality” is a characteristic of all social groups, including the agencies that attempt to implement changes, as well as the communities that are affected (Guidelines and Principles for Social Impact Assessment, 1994).

One of the key challenges facing SIA, therefore, does not necessarily involve the physical disruption of human populations, but trying understand the how individuals and communities perceive and react to the impact of a project on their social environment and the significance of these changes. The challenges that SIA faces associated with the “social construct of reality” are further compounded by the dominance of technocratic rationality as the established approach to natural resource decision-making and assessment. As a result there is often a tendency for authorities and developers to dismiss the concerns raised by affected communities as being merely imagined and perceived. However, in some instances the “social construct of reality” can change over time. The provision of information during the EIA process may result in a change in the “social construct of reality”.

In addition, it is almost impossible to accurately predict the true dimensions of social impacts, because change has a way of creating other changes, much as the proverbial rock thrown into the pond, complexity increases with each ripple (Burdge, 1995). This increases the uncertainty and risks associated with identifying and quantifying social impacts. Social scientists have, however, identified the basic dimensions that can be measured and which reflect fundamental and important characteristics of the community. These are highlighted in the social assessment variables and social change processes listed in Section 10.1.5.

In instances where the social assessment specialist is required to make assumptions they must be explicit about:

- Assumptions made in the assessment methodology;
- Gaps in information that may affect the accuracy or reliability of predictions and/or confidence levels;
- The potential implications associated with any of the above; and,
- The associated consequences, highlighting significant or irreversible impacts.

### **10.7 Defining confidence levels and constraints to input**

The level of confidence that the social assessment specialist has/his or her inputs should be clearly stated. A scale from low to high should be used to rate the level of confidence associated with predictions. Constraints and limitations on inputs should be spelt out along with their implications for accuracy and reliability of inputs.

### **10.8 Recommending management actions**

The SIA should clearly identify potential management or mitigation measures. In some instances this would also include the need to develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

#### **Management measures**

Management or mitigation measures include planning and design changes that enhance the benefits associated with a proposed development, or avoid, mitigate, restore, rehabilitate or compensate for negative impacts. This includes the consideration of mitigation measures for potential project alternatives. Outright avoidance of a project or project component should only be recommended when a fatal flaw is identified that cannot be mitigated. As this kind of recommendation has serious implications, the assessment done by the specialist needs to be extensive and of a standard that can be defended in a court of law.

Potential mitigation measures aimed at enhancing benefits include developing and implementing programmes that promote skills training and capacity building, the hiring of local community members and the use of local service providers etc. Representatives from local community organisations should be involved in the design and implementation of these programmes. The involvement of local community representatives is also important to ensure that only genuine local people are given preference. This is not only critical to ensuring that benefits materialize but also to discourage the in-migration of job seekers. Care must also be taken to not create unrealistic expectations with regard to potential benefits. In some instances the proponent may be tempted to make unrealistic promises in the hope of gaining community support for a project. The EIA practitioner has an important role to play in advising the proponent against this practice.

#### **Monitoring and Evaluation Programme**

When developing a monitoring and evaluation programme for the social component of the study it is important to recognize that:

- The social environment is complex and not easily measured in terms of quantifiable criteria or indicators;

- The social environment is dynamic and continually changing; and,
- Given the complex nature of social environments monitoring and evaluation programmes must be implemented over a meaningful period of time. Meaningful data cannot, therefore, be generated in the short term.

Monitoring and evaluation is therefore a complex process that requires specialist input. Bearing this in mind the aspects that should be covered by a monitoring and evaluation programme include:

- The objectives of the project that need to be monitored;
- A set of monitoring indicators to track the progress achieved in terms of the stated objectives. The indicators should be limited in number, and should combine both quantitative and qualitative types of data. The indicators should include *outputs* to be achieved by the project; indicators to monitor the effectiveness of stakeholder participation, indicators to monitor social risk and social development *outcomes*; and indicators to monitor *impacts* of the project. The indicators should be of such a nature that results and impacts can be disaggregated by gender and other relevant social groups;
- A mechanism by which the lessons learned from the monitoring programme and stakeholder feedback can result in meaningful changes that improve the operation of the project;
- The mechanisms for measuring progress and results related to social development objectives of the project;
- The organisational responsibilities in terms of monitoring, supervision, and evaluation procedures. Where possible participatory monitoring mechanisms should be developed in consultation with the affected communities; and,
- An estimate of the resources and budget requirements for monitoring and evaluation activities, and a description of other inputs (such as institutional strengthening and capacity building) that may need to be carried out.

### **10.9 Identifying the best practicable environmental option**

The Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO) approach highlights the technocratic rationality approach that dominates natural resource decision-making and EIAs. This approach is not regarded as suitable for evaluating social impacts.

### **10.10 Communicating the findings of the specialist input**

The SIA Report should be concise and, as far as possible, avoid the use of technical terminology and jargon. Where this is unavoidable, a glossary of terms should be provided in order to ensure that the reader is able to understand the approach to, and findings of, the specialist assessment.

In order to answer the “so what” questions and inform the EIA process the information contained in the SIA specialist report should include:

- Description of the proposed project. The SIA report should serve as stand-alone document. In order to achieve this it must provide a detailed description of the proposed project, including information on the location, size, planned sequence of activities, life span, existing land uses on the site and surrounding land uses,

- proximity of nearest towns, roads and services, etc;
- Description of the methodology, including assumptions and limitations;
- Description of the key risks and uncertainties that may influence the impact assessment findings, including a clear statement of limitations and/or gaps in knowledge or information;
- Description of the Legislative, policy and planning context. This section should provide an overview of the key legislative, policy and planning frameworks that affect the area and the proposed project. These include National, Provincial and Local legislation, and Provincial and Local Planning Documents (Provincial Growth and Development Programmes, Integrated Development Plans and Spatial Development Frameworks, etc);
- Description of the socio-economic and institutional environment. This section should provide a summary of information collected as part of the Social Baseline Survey, including the socio-economic and institutional environment. The information that should be provided is outlined in Section 9.2 and includes information relating to population numbers, employment levels, education levels, key economic sectors, livelihoods, level of services and infrastructure etc. It is important to focus on information that has a bearing on the project and the identification and assessment of social issues. In this regard the social assessment specialists should avoid presenting demographic and economic data that has no relevance to the assessment phase of the study. The baseline social data that is contained in the report should be pertinent to the study and should pass the “so what” test; and,
- Identification and assessment of social impacts. This section should identify and assess the social impacts identified during the public consultation process and those that, based on the specialist’s experience, are also likely to occur. In some instances the affected communities may not be aware of or be in a position to identify all the social impacts that may occur. However, this does not mean that they will not occur. In such cases the specialist should use his/her experience to identify additional social impacts that have not been raised by the public.

The social impacts identified should be linked to the planning, construction, operational and closure phase. In most instances there is a tendency for SIA to focus on the construction and operational phase. The assessment section should include a comparison of impacts with and without mitigation measures. It should also assess the impacts associated with the alternatives identified by the EIA. A summary impact assessment table using the defined impact assessment and significance rating criteria is useful. However, social impacts do not in many cases lend themselves to the technocratic mechanistic approach adopted by traditional EIA assessment methods. While assessment criteria contained in Box 12 do provide the EIA with an effective way of summarising and comparing the findings of specialist studies, these tables do not always provide the most appropriate way of presenting the findings of a SIA. Where assessment tables are used they should be accompanied by a qualitative description of:

- The nature of the impact ;
- The affected parties;
- The effectiveness of the identified mitigation methods; and,
- The likely consequences of the intervention on the affected parties

The assessment section should also provide a clear indication of:

- Whether the impacts are irreversible or will result in an irreplaceable loss to the environment and/or society;
  - The need, where relevant, for higher order assessment to address potentially significant cumulative effects, or issues which fall outside the scope of the EIA process;
  - The specialist's assumptions and degree of confidence in the impact assessment prediction;
  - The beneficiaries and losers from the proposed development;
  - The key management and mitigation actions that fundamentally affect impact significance; and,
  - Identification of potentially viable development alternatives not previously considered.
- Monitoring and Evaluation framework. In some instances it may be necessary to develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. This should be done in consultation with key stakeholders, especially beneficiaries and affected people. The framework should identify social development indicators, establish benchmarks, and design systems and mechanisms for measuring progress and results related to social development objectives and mitigation measures aimed at minimizing potential impacts. The framework should also identify organisational responsibilities in terms of monitoring, supervision, and evaluation procedures. Where possible, participatory monitoring mechanisms should be incorporated.
  - Summary of key findings and recommendations. The key findings of the SIA and recommendations, including the assessment of alternatives, should be presented in a concise and easy to access format. \
  - References and sources of information. The following information should be provided:
    - References for all sources of information and/or data used;
    - Names and dates of people and organisations interviewed, including telephonic interviews; and,
    - Copies of questionnaires developed as part of the study.

As noted earlier, in some instances the confidentiality of informants may need to be protected. In such instances the names, etc, cannot be provided.

## 11 SPECIALIST INPUT TO MONITORING PROGRAMMES

The monitoring programme should aim to ensure that the conditions of the Record of Decision are satisfied (should the project receive environmental authorisation). Monitoring can be carried out **prior to the construction phase** (to establish a reliable baseline), or during the **construction, operational** and/or **decommissioning** phases of a project, depending on the particular risks of significant impacts during these phases and/or the need to monitor compliance with requirements. Section 10.8 outlines the components of a monitoring and evaluation programme.

The key to developing an effective Monitoring Programme is the identification of an appropriate set of indicators. An indicator is a measure used to demonstrate the change

or result of an activity, project or programme. Indicators should be **SMART**:

<b>S</b>	Specific	An indicator should reflect what is trying to be measured in an accurate way. Good indicators limit and focus data collection.
<b>M</b>	Measurable	An indicator must be measured in either qualitative or quantitative terms,
<b>A</b>	Attainable	An indicator should be feasible in terms of finances, equipment, skills and time
<b>R</b>	Relevant	An indicator should be relevant in terms of the objectives of the assessment and perceptions of the stakeholders
<b>T</b>	Trackable	An indicator should be capable of picking up changes over time

Indicators should also be:

- Factual: mean the same to everyone;
- Valid: measure what they claim to measure;
- Verifiable: can be checked; and,
- Sensitive: reflect changes.

In terms of selecting indicators for a Monitoring Programme the following aspects should be considered:

- What are the objectives of the activity, project or programme and what sort of information will assist to assess if the objectives are being met. At the end of the day the indicators need to be relevant and provide useful data;
- Who needs what type of information. The indicators selected must reflect the needs of the affected community and as such must be accessible and accepted by the community;
- Why do they need the information;
- How frequently do they need it;
- What is the most effective and efficient way to collect the information required. The indicators need to provide useful information at an acceptable cost;
- What is the most effective and accessible way of presenting the information; and,
- Is the information presented in a format that is accessible and can be understood by the affected communities. Understanding the information is critical for community buy-in into the programme.

Each indicator should have:

- A name;
- A definition and objective;
- An outline of its relevance to the project objectives;
- Indication of which stage in the programme the indicator is being used (e.g. the actual move, settling down phase or long-term, on-going component of the project);
- A description of the linkages with other the indicators;

- A description of how it will be measured (approach);
- Indication of the frequency, timing and the level (macro/micro) being monitored;
- A description of any limitations/constraints related to the use of the indicator; and,
- A description of the nature of the information to be collected (descriptive vs. quantitative).

The baseline data collected as part of the Social Baseline Survey plays a key role in the development and implementation of a social monitoring and evaluation programme. This data provides the benchmark against which social changes will be reflected and can be monitored.

## PART E: REVIEW OF SPECIALIST INPUT

### 12 SPECIFIC EVALUATION CRITERIA

Reference should be made to the *Guideline for the review of specialist input in EIA processes* for the generic review criteria that can be applied to any specialist input. This section only provides specific guidance on reviewing the social component. When reviewing specialist social assessment reports it must be judged whether the approaches and methods used are sound, the results are plausible and whether the conclusions are logical and substantiated by the results. Section 10.10 provides an outline of the information that should be contained in a SIA Report. Appendix A provides a generic Terms of Reference for a SIA Report. The general approach adopted should be based on the approach outlined in the Guidelines and Principles for Social Impact Assessment (Inter-organizational Committee, 2003). Under certain conditions it may be necessary to obtain the services of an independent specialist to act as reviewer.

Criteria linked to social sustainability, equity and environmental justice can also be used to assess impacts and review the findings of SIA Reports.

#### **Impacts have the potential to jeopardise social sustainability if:**

- They impact on or remove access to key resources required for subsistence and maintaining livelihoods;
- They threaten vulnerable groups;
- They threaten the health and safety of individuals, households and or communities;
- They threaten cultural or heritage sites (historical, archaeological, palaeontological, burial, ceremonial, etc).
- They threaten lifestyles, traditions, and values;
- They threaten political stability and power relationships;
- They violate legislation or peoples rights;
- They are inconsistent with accepted policies, plans, conventions or other international agreements;
- Impacts are unknown or uncertain and there is inadequate knowledge or information to predict them with confidence;
- They lead to substantial negative cumulative impacts; and,
- There is irreversible commitment of productive land for unproductive purposes.

#### **Impacts would be inconsistent with equity and environmental justice principles if:**

- There is unfair distribution of costs and benefits – vulnerable or disadvantaged communities or groups worse off;
- Vulnerable or disadvantaged persons are unfairly discriminated against in the distribution of adverse impacts;
- There is substantial diversion of resources to the detriment of the natural and/or human environment;
- Inadequate attention is paid to compensation, trade-offs and substitutes;
- The gap in living standards between different income groups is increased rather than narrowed;

- The interests, values and needs of interested and affected parties are not taken into account, specifically vulnerable groups; and,
- Impacts are highly contentious in terms of acceptability or levels of acceptance.

## PART E: REFERENCES

### RECOMMENDED READINGS AND USEFUL RESOURCES

- Barrow, C J (1997), *Environmental and Social Impact Assessment: An Introduction* (Arnold, London)
- Barrow, C J (2000), *Social Impact Assessment: An Introduction* (Arnold, London)
- Barrow, C.J. 2002. Evaluating the social impacts of environmental change and the environmental impacts of social change: An introductory review of Social Impact Assessment. *Environmental Studies*, 59(2): 185-195.
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- Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT). 1998. *Guideline Document: EIA Regulations – Implementation of Sections 21, 22 and 26 of the Environment Conservation Act*. Department of Environmental Affairs & Tourism, Pretoria.
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- Finsterbusch, K. 1995. In praise of SIA - A personal review of the field of social impact assessment: feasibility, justification, history, methods, issues. In: *Impact Assessment*. (Chapter 13(3): 229-352).
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- Interorganizational Committee on Guidelines and Principles for Social Impact Assessment (1994), *Guidelines and Principles for Social Impact Assessment* (US Dept Commerce, NOAA Tech Memo NMFS-F/SPO-16). Reprinted in *Impact Assessment* (1994), 12(2), pages 107–152; *Environmental Impact Assessment Review* (1995), 15(1), pages 11–43.
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## USEFUL WEBSITES

### SIA Theory:

- <http://www.socialimpactassessment.net>
- <http://www.iaia.org>

### Demographic information

- <http://www.demarcation.org.za/>

### Crime statistics

- [http://www.saps.gov.za/statistics/reports/crimestats/2004/crime\\_stats.htm](http://www.saps.gov.za/statistics/reports/crimestats/2004/crime_stats.htm)
- <http://www.iss.co.za>

### Integrated Development Plans

- [www.idp.org.za/](http://www.idp.org.za/)

### History

- <http://www.sahistory.org.za>

## APPENDIX A: COMMON EIA TERMS AND CONCEPTS

The following definitions aim to clarify common EIA terms and concepts:

- **Environmental impact assessment:** A process that is used to identify, predict and assess the potential positive and negative impacts of a proposed project (including reasonable alternatives) on the biophysical, social and economic environment and to propose appropriate management actions and monitoring programmes. The EIA process is used to inform decision-making by the project proponent, relevant authorities and financial institutions. The process includes some or all of the following components: pre-application planning, screening, scoping, impact assessment (including the identification of management actions and monitoring requirements), integration and decision-making. Suitably qualified and experienced specialists may be required to provide input at various stages of the EIA process.
- **Pre-application planning:** The process of identifying and incorporating environmental opportunities and constraints into the early stages of project planning and design, prior to the submission of an application for statutory approval. This includes the identification of potential fatal flaws and negative impacts of potentially high significance, as well as the identification of alternatives and management actions that could prevent, avoid or reduce significant impacts or enhance and secure benefits. This process is sometimes referred to as “pre-application screening”, “positive planning” or “fatal flaw assessment”.
- **Screening:** A decision-making process to determine whether or not a development proposal requires environmental assessment, and if so, what level of assessment is appropriate. Screening is usually administered by an environmental authority or financial institution. The outcome of the screening process is typically a Screening Report/Checklist.
- **Scoping:** The process of determining the spatial and temporal boundaries (i.e. extent) and key issues to be addressed in an impact assessment. The main purpose is to focus the impact assessment on a manageable number of important questions on which decision-making is expected to focus and to ensure that only key issues and reasonable alternatives are examined. The outcome of the scoping process is a Scoping Report that includes issues raised during the scoping process, appropriate responses and, where required, terms of reference for specialist involvement.
- **Impact assessment:** Issues that cannot be resolved during scoping and that require further investigation are taken forward into the impact assessment. Depending on the amount of available information, specialists may be required to assess the nature, extent, duration, intensity or magnitude, probability and significance of the potential impacts; define the level of confidence in the assessment; and propose management actions and monitoring programmes. Specialist studies/reports form the basis of the integrated Environmental Impact Report compiled by the EIA practitioner.
- **Trigger:** A particular characteristic of either the receiving environment or the proposed project which indicates that there is likely to be an *issue* and/or potentially significant *impact* associated with that proposed development that may require specialist input. Legal requirements of existing and future legislation may also trigger the need for specialist involvement but are not discussed in this guideline.

- **Issue:** A context-specific question that asks, “what will the impact of some activity/aspect of the development be on some element of the biophysical, social or economic environment?” (E.g. what is the impact of atmospheric emissions on the health of surrounding communities?).
- **Impact:** A description of the effect of an aspect of the development on a specified component of the biophysical, social or economic environment within a defined time and space (e.g. an increased risk of respiratory disease amongst people living within a 10km radius from the industry, for the duration of the life of the project, due to sulphur dioxide emissions from the industry).
- **Root cause/source of impact:** A description of the aspect of the development that will result in an impact on the biophysical, social or economic environment (e.g. atmospheric emissions from industrial stacks).
- **Risk situation:** A description of the environmental or operating circumstances that could influence the probability of a significant impact occurring.
- **Scenarios:** A description of plausible future environmental or operating conditions that could influence the nature, extent, duration, magnitude/intensity, probability and significance of the impact occurring (e.g. concentration of sulphur dioxide emissions during normal operations vs. during upset conditions; dispersion of atmospheric pollutants during normal wind conditions vs. during presence of an inversion layer).
- **Alternatives:** A possible course of action, in place of another, that would meet the same purpose and need but which would avoid or minimize negative impacts or enhance project benefits. These can include alternative locations/sites, routes, layouts, processes, designs, schedules and/or inputs. The “no-go” alternative constitutes the ‘without project’ option and provide a benchmark against which to evaluate changes; development should result in net benefit to society and should avoid undesirable negative impacts.
- **Best practicable environmental option:** This is the alternative/option that provides the most benefit or causes the least damage to the environment as a whole, at a cost acceptable to society, in the long term as well as in the short term.
- **Impact significance:** A term used to evaluate how severe an impact would be, taking into account objective or scientific data as well as human values. A specific significance rating should not be confused with the acceptability of the impact (i.e. an impact of low significance is not automatically “acceptable”).
- **Thresholds of significance:** The level or limit at which point an impact changes from low to medium significance, or medium to high significance.
- **Management actions:** Actions – including planning and design change – that enhance benefits associated with a proposed development, or that avoid, mitigate, restore, rehabilitate or compensate for the negative impacts.
- **Monitoring programmes:** Programmes established to observe, take samples or measure specific variables in order to track changes, measure performance of compliance, and/or detect problems.
- **Review:** The process of determining whether specialist input meets minimum requirements is reasonable, objective and professionally sound.

## **APPENDIX B: MODEL TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR SPECIALIST SOCIAL ASSESSMENT INPUT**

Terms of reference for specialist input should include the following elements:

- Project description;
- Overview of EIA process and timeframes;
- Specific issues and information requirements to be addressed by the specialist;
- Key sources of information;
- Assumptions, limitations and uncertainties;
- Approach to be used;
- Requirements to attend meetings and workshops;
- Requirements to liaise and exchange information with other specialists;
- Protocol for stakeholder engagement;
- Report template providing structure of contents, formatting styles and standard terminology (including impact assessment criteria if applicable);
- Clarification of review and integration process;
- Requirements for specialist sign-off on the specialist report and inputs to integrated reports;
- Summary of tasks, deliverables and due dates;
- Budget and payment schedule, including penalty clause for late delivery;
- Confidentiality agreement ; and,
- Protocols for communication with outside parties during the project.

## **APPENDIX C: SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS: SOCIAL ASSESSMENT VARIABLES**

The list of social assessment variables and associated questions provided below were developed by Dr S Malan. The variables provide a general guideline, but should not be seen as an exhaustive description of possible social impacts.

### **SOCIAL CAPITAL**

#### **Population change**

- Will the development lead to an increase in numbers of a certain section of the population, e.g. upper income classes?
- What would the impact of such a change be on the existing social environment?

#### **In-migration of unemployed work seekers**

- Will the development intentionally or unintentionally contribute to the in-migration of work seekers into the area?
- What would the impact of this change be on the existing social environment?

#### **Change/disruption of power relationships**

- Will the development impact on the levels of power, opportunity and access of individuals or sections of the community?
- Is the development being used for the political gain of a section of the community, and what are the implications for the larger social environment?

#### **Disruption of social networks**

- Will the development impact on existing social networks? This could be due to the presence of outsiders in communities with a high degree of homogeneity and cohesion: the introduction by outsiders of other social practices, such as increase in shebeens, gangsterism, prostitution: changes in the social ethos of the community due to the presence of outsiders: competition for scarce resources and employment opportunities.

#### **Relocation or displacement of individuals or families**

- Will the development at this or a future stage lead to the relocation of residents?
- What will the implications be for their livelihood sustainability?

#### **Disruption in daily living and movement patterns**

- Will the development change the lifestyle of residents?
- Will the development impact on access to facilities and resources, such as schools, hospitals, fields, forests, etc?
- Will it impact on movement patterns, such as pedestrians crossing roads?
- Will it divide communities physically (e.g. through the building of a highway)?

#### **Dissimilarity in social practices**

- Do new residents have dissimilar social practices to current residents?
- Do the new residents have different values, religious practices, social standard, etc?

#### **Alteration in family structure**

- Could the development threaten family cohesiveness?
- Could it impact on immediate or extended family networks?
- Could it impact on the traditional roles played by members of the family?

#### **Increase in division between rich and poor**

- Will the development exacerbate class equalities?

**Exclusivity**

- Will the development contribute to the culture of exclusivity?

**Inequality**

- Will the development increase unequal access to opportunities or resources?

**Conflict**

- Will the development lead to conflict between sectors of the social environment?
- Is there conflict between the developer and the public?
- Is this conflict being addressed?

**HUMAN CAPITAL****Enhanced/reinforced economic inequities**

- Will the development enhance or enforce class inequality?
- Will the development deny or enhance economic opportunities for vulnerable communities?
- What levels of economic opportunity will the development create?
- How sustainable are the employment opportunities created by the development?

**Change in the commercial/industrial focus of the community**

- Will the development change the income generating focus of the community?
- Do residents have the required skills, life experience and contextual understanding to benefit from the proposed development?
- Will a change in economic focus associated with the development have repercussions for social cohesion?

**Change in employment equity of vulnerable groups**

- Are vulnerable groups able to take advantage of changed employment opportunities associated with the development?
- Will vulnerable groups have to compete with more appropriately qualified applicants from elsewhere?

**Change in occupational opportunities**

- Will the development lead to an increase or decrease in employment opportunities?
- What levels and types of employment will the development create?
- What types of skills will the development require?

**Availability of appropriately qualified workers**

- Does the existing social environment have appropriately qualified workers?
- Are appropriate plans in place for skills development and acquisition?
- Will skilled workers need to be imported?

**Health, noise and visual impacts**

- These are specialist areas that can have significant social implications.

**Safety and crime impacts**

- How will the development impact on existing crime and safety patterns?

**Change in leisure opportunities**

- How will the development impact on access to existing leisure opportunities, such as hiking, walking and swimming?

**Access to environmental resources**

- Will the development impact on people's access to environmental resources, such as water, wood, medicinal plants etc?

**Change in sense of place**

- Will the development impact on people's "sense of place", e.g. through the large-

scale development of a rural community?

- How will the change “in sense of place” impact on people’s relationship to the environment?

#### **Implications for social history**

- What are the implications of the development for the social history of affected communities?
- Will the development further marginalise communities that have been relocated during?
- Will the development affect processes, structures or patterns that are valued as part of the social history of an area?

### **PRODUCTIVE CAPITAL**

#### **Change in community infrastructure**

- Will the development change any aspect of community infrastructure, such as creches, clinics, schools, churches, formal or informal sports fields, open areas, dumping grounds etc?
- Will the development create increased demand for basic services, e.g. water, electricity, sewerage, roads?
- Will the existing access of the community to basic services be impacted by the development?

#### **Change in housing needs/demands**

- Will the development create a housing need, e.g. due to the in-migration of construction workers?
- Has the need for more housing been addressed by the development and or the authorities?

#### **Change in access to resources that sustain livelihoods**

- Will the development impact on people’s (legal or illegal, formal or informal) access to environmental resources that help to sustain their livelihoods, e.g.
  - Grazing land for their cattle;
  - Fishermen’s access to lagoons/lakes/the ocean;
  - Wood for heat/ cooking/ selling;
  - Rubbish dumps (for rubbish picking communities).

#### **Land acquisition and disposal, including cost and availability of land**

- Will the development contribute to or directly impact on the ability of local residents to keep or acquire property / land?
- Will the development lead to a significant increase in the cost of land/property in the area?
- Will the development set a precedent for change in land use in the area?
- Will the development result in an increase of land/property prices?
- Will the increase in land/property prices exacerbate class and race inequity?
- Are there any potential land-claims for the area?
- How would the development affect the claims process?