

Session 5.

Skill-Building in Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

Transect walk and practical exercise

Summary

This session consists of a small-group exercise based on a short, focused transect walk to a site within the hotel grounds. Participants will receive a hypothetical project scenario in order to practice the characterization of baseline conditions at their assigned location. Through facilitator-led observation and discussion, participants are also prepared for the workshop's more extensive field-based exercise.

Session 5a: EIA Skill-Building Exercise—Briefing and Classroom Preparation

This session will introduce participants to the Transect Walk Exercise, including the objectives and methodology of this EIA skill-building exercise. The participants will be introduced to the methodology of baseline conditions evaluation and will receive instructions on how to fill out the "Transect Walk Observation Form."

This classroom preparation will enable participants to understand the general project scenarios to be assessed, and it is during this time that they will be divided into small groups for the exercise.

Scenario and Instructions

Listen carefully to the project scenarios presented by the facilitator(s). Understand the structure and objectives of the exercise.

Session 5b: EIA Skill-Building Exercise—Transect Walk (1 hr.)

Participants will walk to the designated hotel "project site". Each group will be accompanied by at least one workshop facilitator. The field visit will enable participants to practice observation and EIA skills needed to characterize the baseline situation and identify impacts and issues of concern.

Scenario and Instructions

At the project site, observe the key elements of the baseline situation that are relevant to your hypothetical activity and identify the characteristics of those baseline conditions. You should be on the lookout for health and safety issues as well as any socio-economic considerations that may not immediately strike one as "environmental" in nature, but could nonetheless affect community health and safety.

Participants discuss baseline situation as a small group during the field visit. They solicit stakeholders' input, and take notes.

Session 5c: Debriefing EIA Skill-Building Exercise

This session will provide time to synthesize and share observations from the transect walk exercise and deepen participants' understanding of baseline characterization. Should time allow, groups will discuss approaches to limit the possibility that the hypothetical activity contributes to adverse impacts.

Scenario and Instructions

Using the observations and information gathered during the field visit, each small working group will review and characterize the most relevant aspects of the baseline situation, including ongoing environmental management efforts and measures. Small groups should record their findings. Facilitators will serve as resources throughout the process.

Transect Walk Observation Form	
<p>Hypothetical scenario: The hotel has hired you to do a mini Environmental Impact Study for the expansion project of the hotel. The hotel wants to assess the potential environmental impacts of the project before starting it.</p> <p>The objective of the exercise is to conduct an assessment of conditions at the site of the proposed expansion and record observations of environmental interest, using this form.</p> <p>In subsequent sessions, another format will be used to identify environmental impacts and develop mitigation measures.</p>	
<p>Initial description of the place: Existing activities / land use, existing infrastructure, description of surroundings <i>Example: There is a community center and health clinic bordering the site, while most of the site is currently Manioc plantation.</i></p>	
Baseline elements	Observations with environmental interest
<p>Physical: Topography, geology, soil, climate, condition of water sources, pollution levels, etc. <i>Example: Topography: Sloping site with a grade >10%. Borders the [NAME] River.</i></p>	
<p>Biological: Terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, types of flora and fauna, agricultural land, etc. <i>Example: Fauna: threatened species of bird inhabiting the site. Invasive shrub species [NAME] covers 25% of the site.</i></p>	

<p>Socioeconomic:</p> <p>Demographics, gender, developmental needs, economic activities, security, land tenure, public services (electricity, water, sanitation), laws, etc. <i>Example: Women Association sells fish; Pastoralism is a major livelihood activity.</i></p>	
<p>Cultural:</p> <p>Location / condition of archaeological, historical sites, and / or religious, ethnic, or cultural identities, etc. <i>Example: Location of a religious site: e.g. Catholic church nearby</i></p>	