



Social Impact Assessment in an Icelandic Context

A Summary of Methods and Viewpoints

Social Impact Assessment and Major Projects





Elephant

Animal



Elephants are mammals of the family Elephantidae and the largest existing land animals. Three species are currently recognised: the African bush elephant, the African forest elephant, and the Asian elephant. Elephantidae is the only surviving family of the order Proboscidea; extinct members include the mastodons. [Wikipedia](#)

Phylum: Chordata

Length: Asian elephant: 5.5 – 6.5 m

Mass: African bush elephant: 6,000 kg, Asian elephant: 5,400 kg, African forest elephant: 2,700 kg

Gestation period: African bush elephant: 22 months, Asian elephant: 18 – 22 months

Lifespan: African bush elephant: 60 – 70 years, Asian elephant: 48 years, African forest elephant: 60 – 70 years

Height: African bush elephant: 3.3 m, Asian elephant: 2.7 m

Representative species

[View 10+ more](#)



Indian elephant



African bush elephant



Asian elephant



African forest elephant



Palaeoloxodon naumanni

[Feedback](#)

Social Impact Assessment and Major Projects

Lord Morley – when asked to describe an elephant: “It is difficult but you will easily recognise one when you see it”



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Asian elephant



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Social Impact Assessment and Major Projects

What are the main characteristics of a “Major Project”:

- Investment.
- Land use; manpower.
- Many stakeholders, complex organizational links.
- Wide ranging impacts.
- Significant and complex effects.
- Need special procedures.
- Extractive; primary; infrastructure and utilities; services.
- Band, point

Social Impact Assessment and Major Projects



Social Impact Assessment and Major Projects

*„Why does the EU not use Social Impact Assessment?“
(IAIA 2015)*

Social impacts? ...

*„Isn't that just some foam (froða) to
make the project look good?“*

Are we doing it wrong?

What are „the others“ doing

Can we improve?



Áhrif á samfélag

Rýni á aðferðum sem meta eiga áhrif
framkvæmda og áætlana á samfélag

September 2016



Research carried out with support from the National Planning Agency

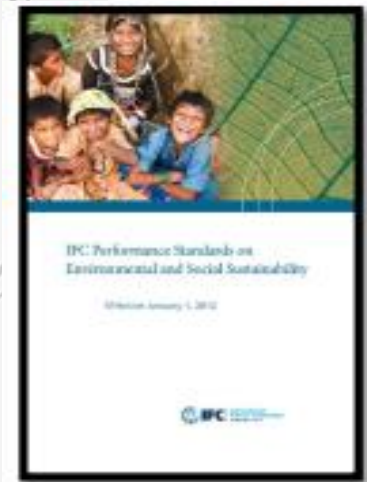
Review of methods for social impact assessment of plans and projects

1. Methods and main issues in SIA
 - Within international organisations and institutes
 - Selected other countries for comparison
2. Review the current status in SIA in Iceland
 - Definitions, legislative environment, guidelines etc.
 - Summarize Icelandic research carried out on the social impacts of major projects
3. Analyse Icelandic Environmental Statements
 - Twenty five ES's – project and strategic level
4. Comparison of methods and main issues within the international examples and the Icelandic examples.
5. Improvements - recommendations



International Benchmarking: What was reviewed?

- IIAA Guidelines
- World Bank
- IFC
- Norway – the Norwegian Roads Administration
- Greenland – Bureau of Minerals and Petroleum
- United Kingdom
- Finland



12 Social Impact Studies

- 2001-2006: Environmental and social impacts of an Aluminium smelter in Reyðafjrður and Karnahnukar Power Plant
- 2003-2010 Social impacts and regional development in connection with an Aluminium Smelter in East Iceland
- 2004 Sustainability Project carried out by Alcoa and Landvirkjun
- 2005: Road tunnels in East Iceland – Social and Economic Impacts
- 2007: New road across Kjölur – Social Impact Assessment
- 2007: Oil Refinery in the Westfjords – a study of selected social impacts
- 2008: Svínavatnsleið Road – Social Impact Assessment
- 2009: Aluminium smelter in Bakki, Húsavík – Social Impact Assessment
- 2010: Road across Dynjandisheiði – Social Impact Assessment
- 2013: SIA of Industrial Development in Suðurnes Peninsula
- 2013 Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Protocol – Blönduvirkjun og Hvammsvirkjun Hydro Electrical Plants
- 2015: Vaðlaheiði Tunnel – Social Impact Study carried out in 2014

Environmental Impact Statements and SIA

- Written between 2005-2015
- 4 Strategic Environmental Assessments
- 21 Project Level EIA's
 - 4 Industry
 - 5 Roads
 - 4 Power Plants
 - 4 Energy Transmission
 - 4 Gravel Mines

	Transportaion Plan '15-'26	Reykjavik Municipality Plan '10-'30	Bitra Geothermal PLant	Alcoa Reyðarál Aliminium	Vatnsskarð Gravel Mine	North-East Road	OHTL Krafla - Þeistareykir
Year	2015	2013	2008	2006	2009	2007	2010
A chapter on Social Impacts?							
Special SIA Report							

What are social impacts?

BOX 1: What are social impacts?

Social impacts are changes to one or more of the following:

- people's way of life – that is, how they live, work, play and interact with one another on a day-to-day basis;
- their culture – that is, their shared beliefs, customs, values and language or dialect;
- their community – its cohesion, stability, character, services and facilities;
- their political systems – the extent to which people are able to participate in decisions that affect their lives, the level of democratisation that is taking place, and the resources provided for this purpose;
- their environment – the quality of the air and water people use; the availability and quality of the food they eat; the level of hazard or risk, dust and noise they are exposed to; the adequacy of sanitation, their physical safety, and their access to and control over resources;
- their health and wellbeing – health is a state of complete physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing 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 aspirations for their future and the future of their children.

Source: Vanclay, F. 2003 International Principles for Social Impact Assessment. *Impact Assessment & Project Appraisal* 21(1), 5-11. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3152/147154603781766491>



Social Impacts

Most frequent emphasis in ES's

- Human health
 - Air quality, noise
 - Disturbance: vibration, dust, noise etc.
- Safety
 - Natural Hazards
 - Safety and risk, mostly traffic
- Economy
 - Local impacts
 - Employment from projects
 - Impacts on tourism
- Transportation
 - Especially traffic during construction

Quality of life issues such as landscape and visual impacts, recreation etc.



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A chapter on Social Impacts?								
SIA Report								
Health	Human health							
	Disturbance							
Safety	Natural Hazards							
	Safety							
Economy and employment	Local							
	National (socioeconomic)							
Demography	Population							
	Composition of demography							
Social Environment	Services and trade							
	Social Services							
	Recreation							
	Transportation							
Housing and livelyhood	Residential							
	Employment							
	Other valuables							
	Settlement pattern							
	Not a special SIA study but a study on outdoor recreation and tourism						No	Yes

An aerial photograph showing a coastal town with a mix of residential and commercial buildings. A large, multi-lane highway interchange with several overpasses and ramps is prominent in the foreground and middle ground. The town extends to the water's edge, and the sea is visible in the background under a cloudy sky.

Where and when do we do SIA?

- No legal requirement to carry out SIA's although emphasised during scoping for mandatory SEA/EIA's
- Carried out in many cases on a strategic level and as part of monitoring
 - Infrastructure assessments
 - Socioeconomic studies
 - SIA's during planning and feasibility of major infrastructure projects
 - Environmental Impact Assessment



Iceland's characteristics

- High education level
- Strong infrastructure
- High equality status
- Strong legal environment
- Open for stakeholders and public to participate

Public participation, access and rights

- Clear minimum requirements for public engagement and presentation
- In many cases more presentation and consultation than the bare minimum
- Level of participation differs between projects



Iceland's characteristics

- Dispersed population
- Small communities
- Connection issues (quality, distances, seasonality)
- Sensitive to i.e. labour influx, big companies in small communities

Wrap-up

- Covering a number of issues and within different levels of decision making from strategy to project
- Do we need to sharpen our approach?
 - Less foam more content?
- One SIA is not necessarily the answer but make sure to cover the range of topics somewhere
- Focus on improving the benefits and minimising the adverse
- Recognise that there are different size elephants with different needs 😊