

Module I

Social Assessment and Risk Analysis in Development Investment Projects

Introductory Note

The opening lecture of the training course places the risk analysis for resettlement management in the broader context of ADB's effort to promote the social assessment (SA) methodology for development projects in [developing member countries](#) (DMCs). Social risk analysis is explained as part of social assessment.

While the identification of risks is a general component of SAs, social risk analysis gains particular prominence in projects which cause resettlement because of the "out of the ordinary" process of displacement, absent in most other development projects. Yet development-induced displacement and resettlement must be defined from the beginning not as anomaly external to development, not as an accident or occasional error, but rather as an inevitable necessity in certain singular situations where development cannot avoid a change in existing patterns of land use, water use, human habitat and population distribution in the territory. The implication is that DIDR needs to be treated as companion of development, undesirable, but still a process which occurs with a certain regularity, particularly in infrastructure projects, water resource projects, urban development, and other project categories.

This makes it essential to develop the social design for resettling people in ways which will prevent, reduce, and mitigate its risks to the livelihood of those affected and will include, not exclude them, in development's stream of benefits.

To describe "how to think" about social assessment (SA), the module presents a concisely constructed model, which in only three power points captures the essence of what SA is and does. The model responds to the key questions of "what is to be done in SA", " who is doing the SA?", "when is SA to be done?", and "which should be the products of SA?", to be delivered and incorporated in the project.

The process of SA is explained as three sets of key “tasks” of the social specialist during the SA, and three corresponding set of “products”, resulting from these tasks. Certainly, the manuals devoted to social assessment as main topic contain much more detailed descriptions, but the lecture attempts to supply a concise and elegant mini-matrix for SA, as a premise and context for the subsequent presentation of the model and specific methods for social risks analysis and management in resettlement.

The transition to risk analysis is made by outlining four types of adverse social impacts in development projects and involving proactively the audience to name other adverse impacts that they have encountered or experienced. The goal is to elicit an engaging discussion and open-mindedness about identifying intrinsic risks, adverse impacts, and the need for solutions.

The relations between “risks”, a concept increasingly used recently, and “impacts”, a more traditional concept, are further explained, together with the need for both retrospective and prospective analysis to link the perception of potential risks to the analysis of past experiences. This leads into the synoptic presentation of a “critical path” for social risk analysis and management.

The outline of the critical path is presented in the last part of the opening module/lecture as a window into the following sequence of lectures. It condenses into one slide:

First (look horizontally) the succession of steps from establishing the project context within which DIDR risk management is necessary to the last sequence of counter-risk actions and corrections;

Second, (look vertically) it conveys the idea that each step should be bracketed between cooperative efforts of project managers and project-affected populations, oriented to risk “identification, consultation, communication, actions, and monitoring.

These ideas will guide us further in the detailed explorations to which the following modules/lectures are dedicated.