

MANAGING AND ADMINISTERING AN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT STUDY

Key Players in Environmental Assessment

In general, the key players in the environmental assessment process involve the project proponent, environmental agency, consultant, financing or approving agency, and public. The key players in ADB's environmental assessment operations are described in more detail as follows:

- (i) **The Borrower.** The project proponent is usually the executing agency of a Borrower. It may be a private organization in the case of private sector operations. The project proponent is responsible for environmental assessment process and preparing and submitting the environmental assessment report. They are also responsible to ensure that the requirements of public consultation and disclosure associated with the environmental assessment are fulfilled. The project proponent is also responsible for implementation of the EMP and other environmental loan covenants.
- (ii) **RD Sector Divisions.** The sector divisions of RDs prepare the environmental categorization form and supporting documentation in consultation with RSES. They also: (i) discuss and agree with the borrower and environmental agencies on a TOR for the environmental assessment; (ii) ensure the environmental assessment reporting in the RRP, (iii) supervise the incorporation of the environmental assessment's results in loan documents; and (iv) supervise of the implementation of the EMP.
- (iii) **RSES** also reviews the environmental assessment documents and other project activities for compliance with ADB's Environment and Social Safeguard Policies.
- (iv) **A Consultant** is usually hired by either by the project proponent/sponsor or ADB to prepare the environmental assessment report. In many cases, particularly for projects for the public sector, the Consultant is hired as part of the PPTA.
- (v) **The DMC's environmental agency** works on behalf of the DMC. The agency issues an environmental clearance based on the environmental assessment documents,.
- (vi) **Other Stakeholders** include beneficiaries or affected groups, the public and other interested parties such as NGOs. They are usually involved in reviewing documents, and provide valuable inputs through the environmental assessment process..
- (vii) **Other financing agencies** play a significant role when a project involves cofinancing. In case a project involves financing agencies having its own environmental assessment guidelines, it is necessary to obtain a commitment from both the agency and DMC on which environmental assessment guidelines will be applied – the agency's or ADB's.

Work Plan and Budget

Efficient, cost-effective, and smooth conduct of environmental assessment activities is the basic principle in preparing an environmental assessment work plan. The environmental assessment work plan which defines the environmental issues and breaks them into tasks, assigns the tasks to environmental assessment team members, describes the qualifications required of each team member, schedules the completion of tasks, and prepares the budgets required by each task according to its schedule. Environmental assessment tasks must be scheduled so that the subject items can be completed within the overall time frame of the environmental assessment and feasibility study. The key principles in managing an environmental assessment are

- (i) focus on the main issues,
- (ii) explore other available information,
- (iii) involve appropriate persons and groups,
- (iv) link information to decisions about the project,
- (v) present clear options for mitigation of impacts and for sound environmental management, and
- (vi) provide information in a form useful to decision makers.

As environmental assessment studies vary in scope, quality, and levels of expertise required in their preparation, the cost of the studies will depend on the quality of the advice provided to the decision makers through individual assessments and their intended use in project design, implementation, and management. While the costs of preparing an environmental assessment report sometimes appear high, it is actually low compared with the overall project cost, and considering its benefit to the project. Generally, environmental assessment costs range from 0.1 to 1 percent of the overall project costs for Category A projects.

Environmental Assessment Personnel

Environmental assessments may be prepared by an individual or team of environment specialists drawn from various disciplines depending on the size and complexity of the project. Selection of the environment specialists is based on the nature of the project. For example, a dam and flood control project may require the skills of a water resources engineer or hydrologist; an aquatic ecologist; or fisheries, agriculture, and resettlement specialists. In most cases with ADB, the environmental assessment is usually carried out as part of the PPTA. Therefore, all of the PPTA team members are obliged to contribute to the conduct of environmental assessment. On this basis, the PPTA team takes the role of the environmental assessment team, and the environment specialist assists the borrower in preparing environmental assessment documents. It is also advisable to provide for the services of a social development specialist to work with the environment specialist in the conduct of the environmental assessment to ensure that social issues are adequately addressed.