

## Social and Environmental Studies

Social and environmental studies must be undertaken as an integral part of the SCBA. These studies are technically required in their own right and are interlinked with the SCBA through analyzing and estimating:

- Social and environmental mitigation and the costs thereof,
- Quantifiable social and environmental benefits,
- Non quantifiable social and environmental benefits.

Highway projects almost always have significant environmental impacts. Safety and health standards can also affect the planning of projects. Both Government PPP agencies and investors will need to know which type of social and environmental impact studies are needed, the type of permits and licenses required and the impacts and mitigation measures needed. The cost of mitigation measures must also be estimated at this stage.

The laws and regulations specifying the procedures and assessments and that are needed for each specific project must be clarified at an early stage. This is because the regulations may affect the construction and operation of facilities. They may affect the need to preserve the natural environment and may affect the liability for past and future environmental damage as well as the need to resolve other issues.

Therefore, within the Feasibility Study (FS) there will be the need to consider and answer these questions. The first consideration is what level of study is required bearing in mind two key aspects:

- What studies are legally required, and
- What additional studies are required, if any, to provide both government and bidders with sufficient information to prepare appropriate tender documents and ensure risk minimizing bids, respectively.

It should be emphasized that there must also be adequate public consultation on the social and environmental assessments undertaken.

Environmental issues are often governed by laws and regulations. These may stipulate that the proponent of a project may be required either,

- to submit a proposal which includes:
- the environmental impact analysis (EIA),
- mitigation plan
- monitoring plan

If a full EIA is not required, it is still necessary to produce:

- the environmental management program, and
- an environmental monitoring program.

However, if an EIA is required, an environmental impact scoping report is often required initially. If this is approved, the proponent then conducts and submits the more detailed requirements on the basis of the environmental impact scope.

Final approval depends on the EIA being satisfactory and that there are no major adverse environmental impacts which can not be mitigated. The whole process can last between six to eighteen months or more depending on complexity.

A full EIA is expensive, time consuming and is sometimes deferred at this stage. However, both for legal/regulatory reasons and to prepare the project adequately, most projects will require a full and proper study. The time needed to prepare an EIA and to obtain the necessary environmental approvals should be fully considered within the project preparation stage as they are usually time consuming.

ADB classifies projects into 3 types which may provide a useful guide to environmental studies that are needed in the FS and is consistent with the above procedure, as follows:

**Category A:** Projects with potential for significant adverse environmental impacts. A full environmental impact assessment (EIA) is required to address significant impacts.

**Category B:** Projects judged to have some adverse environmental impacts, but of lesser degree and/or significance than those for category A projects. An initial environmental examination (IEE) is required to determine whether or not significant environmental impacts warranting an EIA are likely. If an EIA is not needed, the IEE can be regarded as the final environmental assessment report.

**Category C:** Projects unlikely to have adverse environmental impacts. No EIA or IEE is required.