

SESSION 4

IMPACT ASSESSMENT WORLD CAFE

SESSION SUMMARY.

In this session, participants will get “a taste” of several important themes and concepts in environmental impact assessment (EIA). These themes are relevant to USAID Environmental Procedures and will help broaden participants’ understanding of the environmental review process; much like a food court or world café can expand one’s appetite for new or interesting cuisine! This session encompasses a series of brief segments that provide a high-level summary of the following topics, as well how to identify and address the related impacts. Participants may then decide to seek further training on these issues.

- Ecosystem Services are the short and long-term benefits humans receive due to ecosystems. Integrating these economic, ecological, and social ecosystem services as part of the impact assessment process can help uncover important compromises or trade-offs presented by the project activities.
- Pesticides are designed to kill; their potential impacts on human health and the environment must be closely assessed and monitored, and safer use requirements established so that development activities can be implemented in a sustainable manner.
- Indirect impacts are caused by project actions but may be later in time or farther removed geographically. However, because some indirect impacts are reasonably foreseeable and may have a greater impact, they are an important and necessary aspect of the EIA process.
- Cumulative impacts are those impacts on a resource or receptor compounded over time and area and can be very complex. The combination of impacts needs to be assessed to understand the overarching or longer-term effects of a project.
- Alternatives analysis is used to identify different methods of achieving the same objective. Providing alternatives can alleviate significant impacts on a system while still providing the intended benefits to the recipients.
- Social impact assessment is a necessary complement to environmental impact assessment, because any and all project activities will have an effect on how people live, meet their needs, and function as individuals in society.