

SIA OF PROJECT DEVELOPMENT: BACKGROUND & CRITERIA FOR PROJECT REQUIRING SIA



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*SIA is public involvement
involvement in the project
participatory process in the project*

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The topic is straightforward:

- Background for project requiring SIA
- Criteria for project requiring SIA

This is most apt as a preamble...



MSIA is a professional body for SIA practitioners in Malaysia

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- ☑ SIA is understood differently at different levels;
- ☑ A field of research and practice – SIA professionals
- ☑ A paradigm, a body of knowledge, techniques and values; tool or methodology – the process that SIA professionals follow to conduct SIA



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- ☑ a social science sub-field that develops a knowledge base to provide a systematic appraisal in advance of the impacts on the day-to-day quality of life of persons and communities whose environment is affected by a proposed project, plan or policy change (Burdge 2003).



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[REDACTED]

This new understanding of SIA is summarised in Vanclay's (2002) definition:

SIA is the process of analysing and managing the intended and unintended consequences of planned interventions (policies, programmes, plans, projects) and any social change processes invoked by those interventions so as to bring about a more sustainable and equitable biophysical and human environment.



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[REDACTED]

- Development and social problems or consequences
- Social impacts could be checked if the effects of modernisation/development on population and society could be better understood – anticipate them ahead of time.



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- But it should be carried out or incorporated at the earliest juncture, while still in the formulation and planning stage i.e. long before a development plan, project or programme is being implemented



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- It provides a realistic appraisal of potential social ramifications and suggestions for project alternatives and possible mitigating measures
→ any planned actions would not only be environmentally sound but socially sound as well → sustainable development



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By giving full attention to the social environment – social issues and problems be appropriately streamlined enabling them to be tackled more effectively – more people-centric in the process of decision making.

This calls for a more coherent SIA order.



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The *National Social Policy* officially adopted by the Government in 2003 provided for SIA practice to be carried out in the process of planning and monitoring of both physical and social development.

SIA is officially recognised as a medium/a proactive attitude to development and better development outcomes.



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- SIA Regulator...Local Authority? HQ?
- SIA Evaluation...capacity and capability?
- SIA Approval...need a change in the TCP Act
- These administrative and legislative underpinnings would have much to contribute to the successful adoption of SIA in Malaysia.



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- What can be done?
- There should be a concerted effort to establish an independent unit/department – a neutral entity – could it be called Department of Impact Assessment/Social Planning Unit?, under PM's Department? to oversee, assess and approve SIA reports prior to implementation of planned development/interventions.



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- Rebuttal of myth and perception that conducting SIA is costly...unnecessary luxury
- In the long run it is money-saving...prevention is better than cure...
- Social Assessment vs Social Impact Assessment
- Reactive vs Proactive approach in development

*active
analysis*

*prevention
better than cure*



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With SIA, communities become more participatory, more informed – minimising local resistance, reducing disruption, increase project success thus preventing cost incurred in rectifying social impacts – the latter normally borne by the public sector and not corporations



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*Rebate
Town
planning
blm
to be included*

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- The manual for SIA of Project Development (FDTCP and MSIA) has identified 6 criteria for projects requiring SIA...



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- If the Proposed Project:
 1. is likely to increase risks in public health and safety of the communities.
 2. threatens the existing sense of community identity/cohesiveness or separate/isolates any portion of the community that was previously connected either physically or functionally.



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Subsection 22 (2B) defines:

the development activities of infrastructure or main utilities which include national infrastructure works such as airports, seaports, railway lines and highways; and national utility works such as the construction of dams, main power stations and toxic waste disposal sites.



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It follows that 2 levels of SIA assessment are introduced based on the complexity and severity of social impacts:

1. **The General SIA:** a basic level of assessment of the social impact of a project.
2. **The Detailed SIA:** a more in-depth assessment and more comprehensive, significant social impacts are anticipated through public consultation and participation.



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- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Nuclear power plants | 12. Housing/Township projects of >100 ha or 10,000 pop. that cause resettlement/relocation |
| 2. Highways/Expressways | 13. Airports |
| 3. Railways., LRT/MRT, monorails | 14. Ports |
| 4. Major coastal devpt. projects | 15. Dams |
| 5. Major sand dredging projects | 16. Reclamations |
| 6. Oil and gas projects | 17. Major entertainment centre |
| 7. Quarries | 18. Others, not listed above but fall under any one of the 6 criteria. |
| 8. All types of power plants | |
| 9. High voltage transmission lines | |
| 10. Major swiftlet farming | |
| 11. Waste disposal projects | |



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Projects with minor or negligible impacts, social considerations have to be documented and provided for by answering a list of questions:

1. How does your development impact on the local area? (using SIA scoping questions as guide)
2. Who may be affected?



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The current practice of carrying a SIA for the submission of planning permission application, is for it to be submitted together with the Development Proposal Report to the Local Planning Authorities...

Question: are local authorities ready for the responsibility?...

Back to the original Q of ownership and legal standing...



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The worrying thought is that several institutional constraints still limit the effective application of SIA in planning and decision-making:

- ◆ The range of projects that were made subject to SIA
- ◆ The influence SIA had within the planning and decision-making processes.



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Where do we go from here:

My reiteration of the need to establish an independent unit/department – under PM's Department? to oversee, assess and approve SIA reports prior to implementation of planned development/interventions.

From there, the next step of development programme evaluation, its output and outcome could be carried out more meaningfully.



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THANK YOU



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