

# Industry and Competency Standards for SIA Accreditation in the Philippines? **Let's Talk First about Starting Points**

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## Questions:

1. What is the status of the consulting industry and SIA professionals and competencies in the Philippines?
2. Under what conditions can SIA certification make a difference?

The Industry ~  
Development  
Consulting

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graph TD; A[The Industry ~ Development Consulting] --> B[The Competency ~ SIA People and Practice]; B --> C[The Certification];
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The diagram consists of three vertically stacked rounded rectangular boxes. The top box is orange and contains the text 'The Industry ~ Development Consulting'. A large, light-orange arrow points downwards from the bottom center of this box to the top center of the middle box. The middle box is a darker shade of orange and contains the text 'The Competency ~ SIA People and Practice'. A large, light-brown arrow points downwards from the bottom center of this box to the top center of the bottom box. The bottom box is a dark grey color and contains the text 'The Certification'.

The Competency  
~ SIA People and  
Practice

The Certification

# Development Consulting in the Philippines ~ The Great Transformation?

2000

## FRAGMENTED

- Large multinational firms, med-sized Filipino firms, sea of consultants
- JVs of foreign and Filipino firms

## COMPETITIVE

- Small domestic market, fighting over ODA

## LOW ENTRY AND EXIT BARRIERS

- 'Anyone can be a consultant'

## UNREGULATED

- No industry standards or Code of Conduct
- Consulting organizations ~ voluntary membership

2024

## STILL FRAGMENTED

- Few multinational firms, med-sized Filipino firms, sea of consultants
- Sub-contracting of Filipino firms

## STILL COMPETITIVE

- Small, domestic market, fighting over ODA, **threats from Mandamus ruling**

## STILL LOW ENTRY AND EXIT BARRIERS

- Still 'anyone can be a consultant'

## STILL UNREGULATED

- No industry standards or Code of Conduct
- **Pseudo-regulation: international devt standards**

# Barriers to setting up SIA Industry Standards

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National Consulting Act ~ no developments, supposedly government-managed (through NEDA or DTI)

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Organization of Filipino consultants (COFILCO and IMPHIL) ~ standards around performance and ethics publicized but membership is voluntary

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Industry structure is changing ~ acquisitions and mergers; still a market of 'freelancers'

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Very little profit margins ~ subcontracting of Filipino firms, low local rates. **Industry standards have cost implications.**

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Mandamus ruling can hurt the industry: LGUs as task-masters in road, health, agri, natural resources, tourism and education projects

# The Flipside of Opportunities

- Good and innovative practices
  - Hands-on Expanded Implementation Support (HEIS) ~ product of international consulting firms assigning in-house experts to ADB projects
- Championing/Leadership of performance standards by the national government, LGU and private sector collab
- Guidance in the strengthening of Borrower's E&S Management Systems (ESMS) using international E&S standards, e.g., World Bank's ESF, study of Department of Public Works and Highways ESMS
- High demand in capacity building programs of Filipino consultants. **High interest in a Community of Practice**

# SIA Practitioners in the Philippines

**'Not all social scientists become social development specialists.  
But social development specialists are expected to be social  
scientists.'**

Competency: Qualifications and Proficiency  
Code of Conduct/ Research Ethics



Where are SIA people in the Philippines?

Consulting firms, government special projects' offices, NGOs and academe (e.g., third-party or volunteer monitors like in FPIC projects)

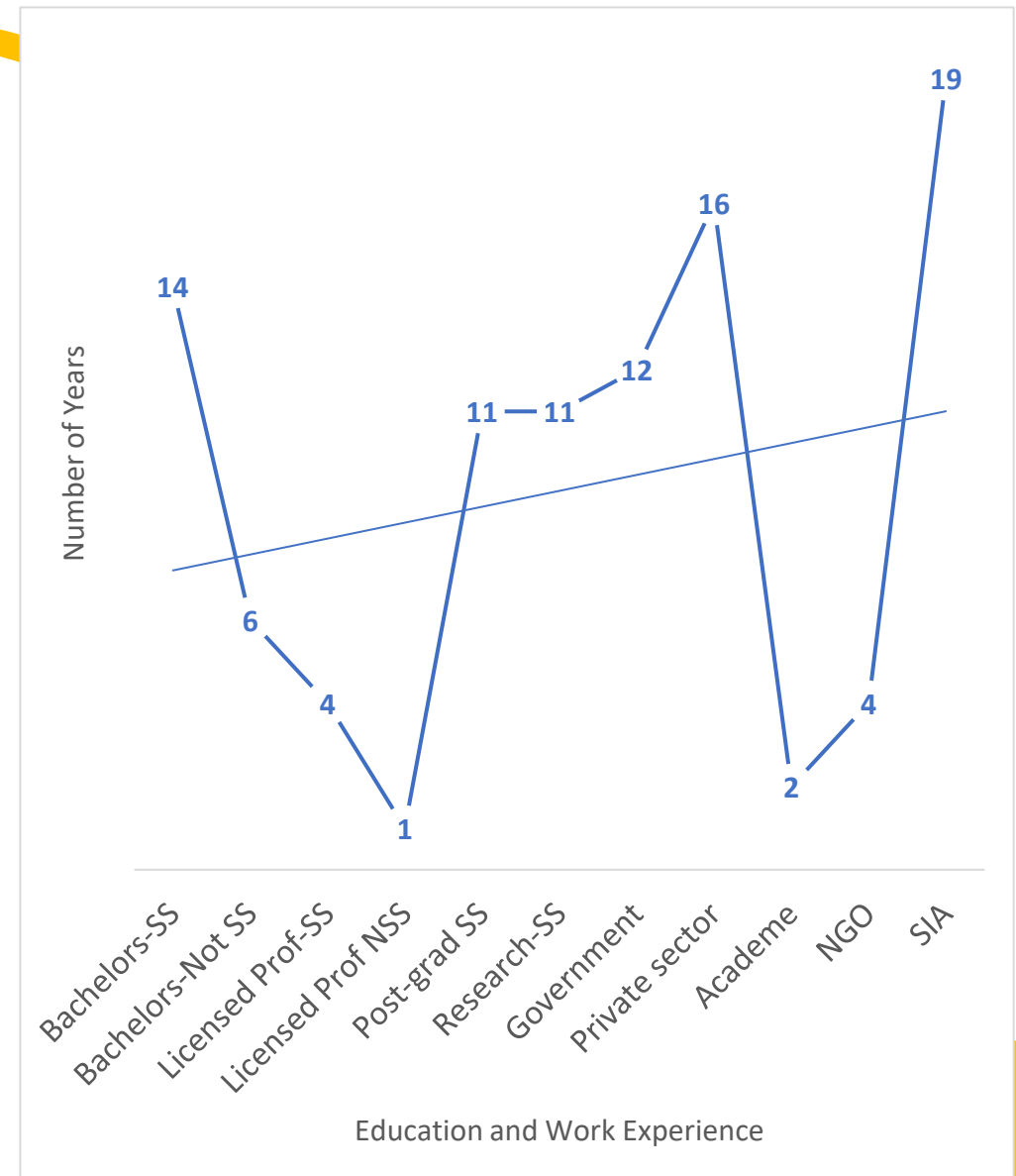
# Licensed Professionals in the Philippines (Philippine Regulatory Commission - PRC)



Source: KIIs (5 licensed professionals)

# Path of Philippine SIA Professionals

- Bachelor's and post-grad degrees in the social sciences
- 'Learning by doing'
  - Work experience in social research, private sector and government is a springboard to SIA (consulting)
- Few are licensed social professionals (social work)



Source: KII and CVs of 20 SIA professionals



# Some Realities in Professional and Industry Practice

1. **Competencies vary across professionals (Internal)**
  - **Social baselining and meaning-making – poor to average** use and analysis of official data, ‘cut and paste’ of social data in local government plans; ‘template’ approach to preparing E&S instruments
  - **Research discipline – poor to average** ~ ‘cut-and-paste’, plagiarism; no proper citations, referencing
  - **Over-reliance on ‘natural sciences’ research methods**, e.g., surveys versus qualitative studies (Carino 1994)
  - **Low accountability of professionals** in working with government counterparts
  - **Indiscriminate industry practices**, e.g., ‘CV nomination for a fee’, junior staff performing the work of nominated senior staff
  - **‘Self-help’** ~ personal costs or sponsorships to attend conferences and training
  - **Tendency towards ‘self regulation’** ~ word-of-mouth on ‘good’ and ‘so-so’ professionals; use of networks for repeat engagements

# Some Realities in Professional and Industry Practice

- 2. Unregulated industry and very low profit margins breed devaluation of SIA work**
  - **Very short engagements versus TOR** ; e.g., WB coastal project – social analysis and SE for 10 days
  - **Combining Social and Environment** to reduce costs
  - **Very low rate of Filipinos in foreign-funded projects**, e.g., **NXXXS** – USD1500/mo for local Social Specialists
- 3. Emerging demands on Social and unharmonized requirements of international development organizations ~**  
gender, climate change/DRRM, conflict, citizen engagement, inclusion, SEA/SH. GBV
- 4. E&S standards and requirements versus few training opportunities and good practices locally** to build on, e.g., Cultural Heritage, cumulative impact assessment, health impact assessment



- Example of a 'ready-made' RAP budget

Source: Road project funded by Dept of Public Works and Highways (DPWH)

**RAP Implementation Budget Estimate**

Activity	Cost Items	Amount	
		Low (≤ 50 HHs)	High (≥ 51 HHs)
<b>i. RROW Acquisition</b>			
1. Land		8,000,000	10,000,000
2. Structures and improvements		10,000,000	20,000,000
3. Financial assistance for tenants		750,000	3,000,000
4. Inconvenience allowance for structure owners on own land		750,000	3,000,000
5. Rehabilitation assistance for PAPs engaging in new income activity		250,000	500,000
<b>Sub-Total (A)</b>		<b>19,750,000</b>	<b>36,500,000</b>
<b>ii. Structures and Improvement</b>			
1. Houses		5,000,000	10,000,000
2. Other structures		5,000,000	10,000,000
3. Trees and perennials		5,000,000	10,000,000
4. Cash compensation for disturbance allowance		1,000,000	2,500,000
5. Income loss		1,000,000	2,500,000
6. Rental subsidy		250,000	500,000
7. Unemployed women		1,000,000	2,500,000
8. Allowance for vulnerable population		1,000,000	2,500,000
<b>Sub-Total (B)</b>		<b>19,250,000</b>	<b>40,500,000</b>
<b>iii. RAP Implementation</b>			
1. Cost for external monitoring		1,000,000	1,500,000
2. Cost for LPMT		1,000,000	1,500,000
3. Cost for Grievance Committee		1,000,000	1,500,000
4. Cost for Social Development Program (SDP)		1,000,000	1,500,000
5. Cost for Public Meetings		1,000,000	1,500,000
6. Cost for Surveys		1,500,000	2,000,000
<b>Sub-Total (C)</b>		<b>6,500,000</b>	<b>9,500,000</b>
<b>iv. Contingency</b>			
1. Contingency Fund (10%)		4,550,000	8,650,000
2. Administrative costs (5%)		2,275,000	4,325,000
<b>Sub-Total (D)</b>		<b>6,825,000</b>	<b>12,975,000</b>

## BARMM, Lanao del Sur

The Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) consists of three (3) component cities, 116 municipalities, and 2,590 barangays. As shown in Table 4-1 below, the entire BARMM has a total population of 4,404,288 based on 2020 Census of Population. Lanao del Sur has a population of 1,195,518, which accounts for 27.65% of the total population in BARMM. Within the province, Marawi City has the highest population, comprising 19.3% of the overall provincial population.

Please include other standard indicators like population growth rate, density, age-sex distribution re sex ratio and dependency burden, household population, total number of households and household size.

**Table 4-1 Population**

Region/Province/Municipality	Population 2020
BARMM	4,404,288
Lanao del Sur	1,195,518
Marawi City	207,010
Saguiran	26,712

Source; PSA, 2020 Census on Population

As of 2022, the Philippine Statistics Authority has established the poverty threshold at PHP 12,030 per month for a family of five, or PHP 79 per day per person for food and non-food necessities. Additionally, as of 2022, the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao has the highest poverty incidence in the country, standing at 37.2%. Unfortunately, the specific poverty incidence for Lanao del Sur is not mentioned in the provided text.



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2021 Full Year Official Poverty Statistics is available in the PSA website. Contains regional and provincial data



Table 9 Indicative Budget for implementation of SEP

Stakeholder Engagement Activity	Total Cost (USD)
<b>Social experts</b>	
Dedicated social safeguards specialist at PIU (30 % of time, for 4 years)	80,000
<b>Consultation and disclosure</b>	
Consultation sessions in all the works-affected communities	300,000
Establishment and maintenance of website	100,000
Radio broadcasts	100,000
Other disclosure campaigns	100,000
<b>Grievance redress mechanism</b>	
GRM Hotline	10,000
Dissemination of information on GRM	20,000
<b>Monitoring and documentation of SEP implementation</b>	
Verification of SEP activities (field visits, etc.)	Included in PIU travel budget
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>690,000</b>

# SIA Certification: The Pluses

## Quality in SIA delivery

- Example of WB ESF accreditation: e-learning and exam, training with experts and specialists and panel interview. With continuing ESF clinics, on-the-job training and mentoring

## Ethics and integrity in research and practice ~ Code of Conduct and quality/performance standards

- Cleansing of 'charlatans' (Vanclay 2020 in Maas and Coakes 2024, p. 39)

## 'Taking SIA seriously' ~ Rigor and contribution to project development

- Building proficiencies and quality networks of SIA professionals; recognition of specialists

## Layers of certification can build specialist expertise and accountability in complex and high-risk projects

- Resettlement, transboundary studies, cumulative impact assessment

# SIA Certification: Some Considerations

- Raising SIA competency standards must consider critical industry changes and challenges
  - ! Competitiveness and low profit margins, factors behind contraction of local consulting industry
- Political economy of development consulting
  - ! Certification does not necessarily lead to higher pay rates or job security
  - ! Regulation of international consulting firms
- Professionalization of SIA ~ Building on the Community of Practice
  - ✓ Need for dependable stream of knowledge and capacity building support
  - ✓ Review of the National Consulting Policy
  - ✓ Time for a Bachelor's degree in Social Impact Assessment?

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Maraming Salamat Po!