

# Cumulative Impact Assessment: A Living Process



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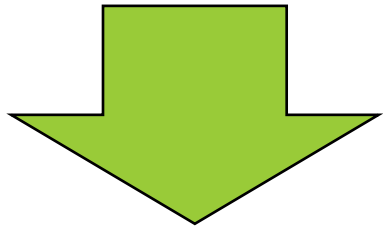
*<https://idbinvest.org/>*



# Two different ways to perform a CIAM

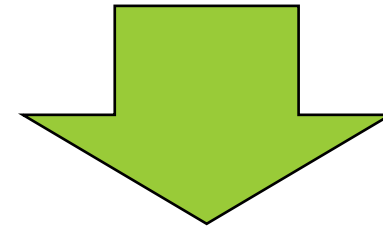
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From the **Planner's**  
Perspective



How **various actions** (projects) will affect a predetermined **VEC or group of VECs** in a preset area in predefined time

From a **Project's**  
Perspective

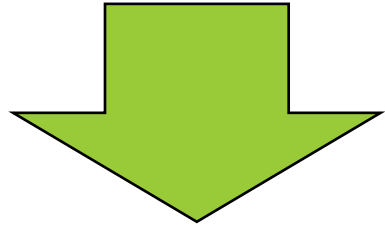


How other actions (projects) will affect the future conditions **of some (important) environmental components (VECs) identified in the Project's EIA.**

# Two different ways to perform a CIAM

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From the **Planner's**  
Perspective



How **various actions** (projects)  
will affect a predetermined  
**VEC or group of VECs** in a  
preset area in predefined time

From a **Project's**  
Perspective

**ESIA**

# Contents of an ESIA

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- **Project Description:** location, size, scope, objectives, expected outputs, development phases, construction or implementation methods, quantities or volumes of work.
- **Area of Influence:** territory where the effects (positive and negative) of the project are expected.
- **Baseline Conditions:** characteristics of the environmental, social, and economic conditions of the project's area of influence.
- **Impact Assessment,** identification and evaluation of the potential impacts (positive and negative).
- **Management Measures,** list of actions to avoid, reduce, minimize, or compensate for undesired or enhance positive impacts.
- **Management Plans,** a description of how and when the management measures are to be implemented

# Degree of uncertainty while developing the ESIA components

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| Component   | Degree of uncertainty* | Comment   |
|---|------------------------|---|
| Project Description                               | Negligible             | Project details are usually known beforehand, as they are part of its final design.                                     |
| Identification of the project's area of influence | Slight                 | However, if a well-experienced team is appointed to undertake this task, this uncertainty can be practically nullified. |
| Baseline Conditions                               | Negligible to slight   | This depends on the type of information used (e.g., primary-secondary; old-new; detailed-general).                      |
| Impact Assessment                                 | Slight to material     | This depends on how the previous components have been performed.  |
| Management Measures                               | Slight to material     | This depends on how the impact assessment has been done.  |
| Management Plans                                  | Slight to material     | This depends on how the management measures have been developed.  |

# Probability of an ESIA's components requiring updates

| Component   | Probability of needing an update* | Comment  |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| Project Description                               | Very unlikely to unlikely         | Very unlikely as any modification in the project design has associated transactional costs that are usually not welcome. However, when major modifications are introduced, it is likely that the whole environmental and social analysis will have to be redone.                               |
| Identification of the project's area of influence | Unlikely to likely                | Even if some minor project characteristics are introduced, this area tends not to vary.  |
| Baseline Conditions                               | Likely to very likely             | This is very common when there is a material lapse between the time in which the ESIA is completed and the time the project is executed; when better information becomes available, or when there has been a substantial in the behavior of the environmental components initially identified. |
| Impact Assessment                                 | Likely to very likely             | If the proposed project and/or baseline conditions change, it is likely that the impact assessment needs to be updated.  |
| Management Measures                               | Likely to very likely             | If the impact assessment has been updated, it is likely that the management measures will also need to be updated as they depend directly on the impact analysis.  |
| Management Plan                                   | Likely to very likely             | If the management measures have been updated, it is likely that management plans will also need to be updated as they depend on the former.  |

# Contents of a CIAM

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- Selection of **VECs**.
- Determination of **temporal and spatial boundaries** for the analysis.
- **Determination of past, ongoing, and future projects** that will be considered in the analysis.
- Determination of the (current) **baseline status of the selected VECs**.
- **Assessment of the cumulative impacts** generated by the projects included in the analysis.
- Design of **measures to manage the cumulative impacts** on each affected VEC.

# Setting-up the list of future projects for the CIAM

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- Its sponsor or representative has requested authorization to initiate the relevant **environmental licensing process**.
- It is included in **the inventory of priority** initiatives to be carried out in the coming years.
- It is part of the **political speech**.
- Has the necessary **financing** for its implementation.
- Authorities have submitted a **credit request to a financial institution** to finance it.
- Has a **strong community support**.
- A **procurement timetable** for the acquisition of goods and services required by the project has been posted.



# Degree of uncertainty while developing the CIAM components

| Component   |  | Degree of uncertainty | Comment  |
|---|--|-----------------------|--|
| Selection of VECs   |  | Negligible            | VECs are usually selected by the authorities, through public consultation, by the team performing CIAM, or a combination of these.   |
| Determination of temporal and spatial boundaries  | Temporal boundaries                                  | Negligible to slight  | The future timeline boundary is usually set by legislation or by common agreement (not more than 15 years), while past timeline is commonly set by how the VECs have behaved in the past (usually no more than 5 years). |
|   | Spatial boundaries                                   | Negligible to slight  | Spatial boundaries are usually set by the authority requiring CIAM. When CIAM is performed from a project perspective, the spatial boundary is the project's area of influence.  |
| Determination of past, ongoing, and future projects, activities, and external stressors | Past, projects, activities, and external stressors   | Negligible            | If their effects are not already factored into the baseline analysis, this identification is simple and has a very high degree of confidence.  |
|   | Ongoing projects, activities, and external stressors | Negligible            | This identification is simple and straight forward: projects are there and, in the worse-case scenario, can be visited if needed.  |
|   | Future projects, activities, and external stressors  | Important to high     | This is the activity that involves the highest uncertainty of the process, since determining when a project will be executed in the future depends on so many variables that are beyond the control of CIAM.             |

# Degree of uncertainty while developing the CIAM components

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| Component   | Degree of uncertainty | Comment   |
|---|-----------------------|---|
| Determination of the baseline status of the selected VECs | Negligible to slight  | Just like an ESIA, an update to the baseline may be needed when new information becomes available, or when there has been a substantial change in the behavior of the VECs. |
| Assessment of cumulative impacts                          | Important to high     | The uncertainty generated by the identification of future projects to be considered in CIAM is carried out to this process.   |
| Design of measures to manage the cumulative impacts       | Important to high     | The uncertainty generated by the identification of future projects to be considered in CIAM is carried out to this process.   |

# Probability of CIAM components requiring updates

| Component   |  | Probability of needing an update* | Comment  |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| Selection of VECs   |  | Very unlikely                     | VECs are usually selected by the authorities, through public consultation, by the team performing CIAM, or a combination of these and normally do not change.  |
| Determination of temporal and spatial boundaries  | Temporal boundaries                                  | Very unlikely                     | The future timeline (not more than 15 years) and past timeline boundaries (not more than 5 years) and normally do not change.  |
|   | Spatial boundaries                                   | Very unlikely to unlikely         | Spatial boundaries are usually set by the authority requiring CIAM and normally do not change. However, when CIAM is performed from a project perspective, and having in mind that the spatial boundary is the project's area of influence, it is unlikely to be changed.  |
| Determination of past, ongoing, and future projects, activities, and external stressors | Past projects, activities, and external stressors    | Very unlikely                     | If their effects are not already factored into the baseline analysis, this identification is simple and has a very high degree of confidence. Unless new information is available, the list of past projects does not change.  |
|   | Ongoing projects, activities, and external stressors | Unlikely                          | "Ongoing projects" may change to be "past projects" as time passes. However, their effects are usually already considered in CIAM.   |
|   | Future projects, activities, and external stressors  | Likely to very likely             | The list of future projects needs to be updated as new information is available. Even in the best-case scenarios, where the list has been determined with a very high degree of certainty, it is often very difficult to determine when such projects will be implemented. |

# Probability of CIAM components requiring updates

| Component   | Probability of needing an update* | Comment  |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| Determination of the baseline status of the selected VECs | Unlikely to likely                | Just like an ESIA, this depends on the type of information available (e.g., primary-secondary; old-new; detailed-general). When CIAM is performed from a project perspective and has not been done as a part of an ESIA or immediately after it, depending on the circumstances, it might be necessary to update the baseline. |
| Assessment of the cumulative impacts                      | Likely to very likely             | As the assessment depends on the baseline conditions of the VECs (which is somehow likely to change) and the projects to be considered (likely to very likely), changes in these requires the assessment to be updated.  |
| Design of measures to manage the cumulative impacts       | Likely to very likely             | As the design of these measure depends on the assessment of cumulative impacts, changes in the latter require the former to be updated.  |

# When to review a CIAM?

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A CIAM should be reviewed at least annually to verify:

- Any change in a **VEC baseline condition**.
- If any of the **future projects** considered or not in the analysis but with direct connection to any of the selected VECs **changes in status**.
- Any other situation that might affect the way the CIAM was performed.
- The necessity of updating it.

**CIAM is a living document!**



# Let's continue the conversation!

Post questions and comments in the IAIA24 app.



**#iaia24**

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