

SOCIAL N A MANUAL L Y S I S



*Volume 1:
Manager's Guide to
Using Social Analysis*

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Technical Service Center



2001

SOCIAL ANALYSIS MANUAL

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WHAT IS THIS MANUAL?

The Social Analysis Manual is guidance for the Technical Service Center (TSC) under the Manuals and Standards Program.

The Reclamation Manual website <<http://www.usbr.gov/recman>> contains:

- ▲ Policy which reflects Reclamation’s philosophy toward social assessment
- ▲ Directives which contain the minimum standards for all social assessments

This TSC manual provides more detailed instructions and information to effectively tailor a social assessment within diverse contexts, socio-cultural settings, and decision processes.

Each program or project involves different purposes and objectives, problems and issues, individual organizations, communities, and people. Thus, no one-size-fits-all approach will provide the needed analyses and insights. We present a range of approaches and suggestions to help focus analyses to present findings that are useful to decisionmakers. Social analysts can use this manual to perform analyses and show the significance of social impacts to the range of alternatives in a proposed decision or action. However, the analyst must rely on professional judgment and expertise to determine and provide the relevant insights for decisionmakers.

Table i.1.—Overall guide to this manual

Chapter	Audience	Find out	Take action
Volume 1: Manager's Guide to Using Social Analysis			
Chapter 1: Executive overview	Decisionmakers, team leaders, managers, and social analysts	Why are social analyses needed? How do social assessments fit into multidisciplinary decision processes?	Use social analysis to implement successful solutions
Chapter 2: Social analysis in the decision process	Team leaders and social analysts	What specific information will we gain from a social analysis and at what stage? What is the role and input of a social analyst?	Write a statement of work Determine expectations in particular studies
Chapter 3: Ensuring useful, accurate results	Managers, team members and leaders, contractors, Contracting Officers, and Contracting Officers' Technical Representatives	How can we track the progress of a social assessment? How can we judge the plan?	Evaluate contract proposals and finished products
Volume 2: Social Analyst's Guide to Doing Social Analysis			
Chapter 4: Effective mindsets for the Reclamation social analysis process	Social analysts, team leaders, and managers	How to tailor social assessments to Reclamation's requirements?	Determine Reclamation's context and to focus the assessment on important decision factors
Chapter 5: Approaches and strategies for the social analysis	Social analysts and team leaders	How can I plan and execute a social analysis? How do we scope out and create a social assessment plan and statement of work?	Develop a complete, focused social analysis plan and estimate of work
Chapter 6: Measurements	Social analysts, team leaders, and managers of social analysts	What factors, impacts, and issues are important?	Determine what to measure in a social assessment
Chapter 7: Data sources	Social analysts	What sources of data are available?	Determine the most effective investigation approaches
Chapter 8: Analysis methods	Social analysts	What methods of analysis are best in what situation?	Select analytical methods and approaches
Chapter 9: Sharing the results	Social analysts, technical writers	How do we present the material most effectively?	Close the process and present the results

VOLUME 1: MANAGER'S GUIDE TO USING SOCIAL ANALYSIS

This volume tells managers, decisionmakers, and team leaders what they need to know about social analysis to effectively use the information from the resulting social assessments. Qualified social analysts also need this information to understand what is expected of them in the overall context of Reclamation decision processes.

To predict all the consequences of Reclamation's decisions, we would need a crystal ball. The task facing managers and decisionmakers is to weigh the tradeoffs among alternative future results of their decisions. Technical analyses of possible consequences from a variety of perspectives are as close as we can get to rational predictions. We need to understand the potential benefits and consequences of a government action on human communities as well as the physical environment. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) defines human communities as "the human environment."

Social assessments help Reclamation decisionmakers and staff, other government officials, partners, and citizens and community leaders understand and cope with social changes that take place at the community and project level not only during the decision process, but through implementation and eventual adaptation or potential decommissioning.

Understanding how social analyses are conducted and how social impact assessments can help a decision process is indispensable. This understanding can help plan for and deal with the opportunities and consequences of a proposed solution to a problem, such as expanding irrigation in a development project or changing a policy that maximizes streamflow and minimizes diversions.

Governments act to make better lives for some groups of people. Social analysis explains how those actions will affect all communities.

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CHAPTER 1: EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

This overview covers why Reclamation needs and uses social analyses and how the results, social assessments, fit into multidisciplinary processes. Reading this chapter will help decisionmakers, team leaders, managers, and social analysts use social assessments to refine and implement successful solutions.

What are social assessments?

The goals of the social analysis are to:

- ▲ Contribute to making projects more sound and sustainable by ensuring that projects fit the individuals and communities served and affected
- ▲ Ensure project effectiveness by increasing support and tailoring institutional arrangements to the local culture
- ▲ Make projects more inclusive by involving not only selected stakeholders but the larger, more diverse community

A social analysis is done to produce a social assessment. These assessments begin with a description of the current situation (the baseline) and of the likely future situation once the project or policy is operational. The difference will be the estimate of the impact on the community.

A social assessment is usually part of an overall multidisciplinary analysis. The social assessment presents an evaluation of how Reclamation's decision processes, projects, and policies change people's lives— "the human environment." It is a systematic process to determine what these impacts are and will be on the day-to-day quality of life of people and communities. Social assessments are done before the decision is made so that the information can be used in the decision process. Social analysis includes examining people's values and beliefs to determine how people and communities interpret the possible impacts of alternative actions on their day-to-day quality of life.

To be effective, social analysis emphasizes the practical application to (or within) the decision process. To be relevant to Reclamation's decisionmaking, the resulting social assessment must describe the potential social effects of Reclamation's plans and actions and show how those effects will relate to the decision.

Defining terms

We recognize that there is an academic debate over specific definitions of terms. Our focus is a practical application within a Federal agency. Therefore, we are using the terms “social impact analysis practitioner,” “practitioner,” “social analyst,” and “social assessor,” as synonyms to refer to the person who uses the Social Analysis Manual to do the social analysis.

One definition of social impact assessment is “a part of the rational problem solving process serving to facilitate decisionmaking activities by determining the range of social costs and social benefits of the alternative proposed courses of action” (Burdge et al., 1999, p. 31).¹

For Reclamation’s purposes, we are defining “social analysis” as the process of considering impacts on humans, and “social assessment” as the product of the analysis (the results needed to describe the impacts on the human community from the action).

¹ Bibliography and full citations are in Volume 2, Appendix 2-B.

What information do decisionmakers and publics need from social assessments?

Decisionmakers need to understand the relevant and significant implications of each alternative, including the no action alternative, in problem solving. For example, if we do x, community y will probably change in this way for these reasons. . . if we do z, these results will occur and people will (or will not) support future projects or support the alternative under the assessment.

To understand the likely impacts of the proposed action and alternatives, publics and decisionmakers need to know:

- ▲ **How the community is organized.**—How do people communicate and interact?
- ▲ **How the community views and adapts to change.**—An influx of agricultural workers may not have any impact in a community that has adapted to different populations in the past, but may be a major impact in a community that has had a static population for many years.
- ▲ **How the community makes decisions.**—What is seen as important: stability or growth? Who makes the decisions? Is the infrastructure present to support changes? What values in the community are important for water-related projects?

The social assessment describes alternative future scenarios for a proposed action and alternatives so decisionmakers have the information to determine the best course of action and so communities understand impacts. (See Volume 2, Chapter 8, section Using alternative future scenarios to compare impacts.)

Why does Reclamation consider social impacts?

Working for the people

The U.S. Government is of the people, by the people, and for the people. This fundamental tenet of the relationship between the government and citizens is set forth in the Constitution and instilled in our laws, court cases, and administrative policies. Thus, government actions are taken for the people. Reclamation's mission is "to manage water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner for the American people."

If our actions are for the people, we need to consider how our actions affect how people live. These considerations go both ways: decisionmakers need to understand the potential consequences of their decisions before they act and people need to know about these changes, so their views are considered in decisions about the future of their community. Social assessments provide the knowledge and insights needed for responsible decisionmaking.

The goal of a properly executed SIA is to identify and understand in advance the consequences of the change for human populations given different impact events (Burdge, 1999, p. 31).

Social assessments help Reclamation act for the people by:

The greatest danger is not from the action but from failing to consider the consequences of that action. (adapted from Burdge, 1998).

- ▲ Identifying opportunities to enhance social benefits and minimize or reduce adverse social consequences
- ▲ Identifying social issues and social constraints that may affect the acceptability of a plan by the interested and affected publics
- ▲ Helping to document the social benefits and costs of each plan for decisionmakers
- ▲ Establishing monitoring procedures to ensure acceptability and viability as new issues emerge during implementation and operation

Saving time and money

In 1991, Charles Kottak evaluated 68 international development projects and found that the average rate of return on investments in projects that integrated the findings from social analysis was twice that of the cases with flawed or no social analysis (Cernea, 1991, p. 458). These savings come in three ways, by:

"In hindsight, one learns that the cost of not doing social analysis is much higher." (Cernea, 1991, p. 11).

- ▲ **Ensuring the process is effective.**—Ignoring social impacts up front guarantees that you will spend a lot more time in the future addressing issues in an adversarial setting.
- ▲ **Developing solutions that will work.**—Social assessments refine and improve solutions, provide input needed to implement and maintain the solutions, and identify the community infrastructure needed to deal with further changes—thus improving the solutions' rates of return.
- ▲ **Avoiding unintended consequences.**—Without social assessments, some social impacts will not be discovered until after a decision has been made and a project is in place—when it is no longer possible to change the project or minimize undesirable impacts (see Burdge, 1999, pp. 58-60 on the importance of social assessments for project success).

In much the same way as technological advances have reduced the costs of solving problems (e.g., water quality), advances in the social sciences have reduced the cost of accomplishing government missions and solving problems. The more we know about how people perceive and respond to social impacts, the less our solutions to problems will cost (Ruttan, 1984).

What do social assessments do?

Measure the social values of water

Water is a resource that not only sustains life, but defines our various ways of life. Within the context of Reclamation’s mission, our major social concern is the relationship between people and water.

Originally, Reclamation “reclaimed the arid lands of the West” to provide life-giving water. Today, our mission is to manage these water resources. The social value of water is how people view water as affecting their daily lives as well as their “way of life.”

These values are often articulated in priorities of use under State water law or authorizing legislation for a program or project. Groups associated with different concerns about water and its use, distribution, and appropriation include:

- ▲ People who have a water right or contract to use water
- ▲ People who value the water in place (e.g., instream flows for fish and flat water for boating)

Our views about water are based on our experience or institutional knowledge passed on by the culture or society we live in. These shared perceptions are often taken for granted within a particular community, but may not be viewed in the same way by other groups. People who have lived through droughts or who can’t get clean water place a higher value on water quality and availability than people who have always had clean water running in their taps.

When we ask people what value they place on water, most respond in terms of how much they pay or are willing to pay in dollars for a given quantity of water. At first glance, water is viewed as a commodity to be bought and sold in the market place, but its social value goes far beyond the simple cost, which assumes it is available. Water is akin to a “common property resource”—Americans feel entitled to have available water that meets safe drinking water quality standards.

People define themselves through their use of resources, such as water. Knowing how people see themselves helps generate support, determine the most effective way to solve problems, and provide a basis for further cooperation and work.

Relate social values to change

What people value determines what becomes an issue—and why they take collective action. For example, because people valued diversity in non-human species, people lobbied to pass the Endangered Species Act.

How we value water determines how we use it. As the U.S. was settled, water was valued for drinking (municipal), irrigation, and power production. Later, industrial development, recreation, and environmental preservation and enhancement became recognized as authorized and “beneficial uses.”

People take action by forming groups, organizations, and institutions to articulate, preserve, and enhance their values, interests, and concerns regarding water use.

Social assessments take a systematic approach to provide decisionmakers with an overall perspective of the human impacts.

The decisionmaker rarely holds the same “value set” as either the social analyst or the affected individuals and the community. These people may have difficulty articulating their views in ways that are meaningful to federal decisionmakers. Without knowing the values of the affected publics and how they view the impacts, the decisionmaker cannot determine how the action will succeed or will affect the community.

The social analyst identifies the context, analyzes the trade-offs (and potential impacts) among alternatives, and describes results such that both the affected population and decisionmakers can understand the relationship between water management decisions and changes in the daily life of a community.

Changes due to water management decisions can be as direct and personal as gaining a job in construction or industry, losing a farm job that depended on irrigation, being forced to move due to an impoundment project, or even moving a church or flooding a Native American sacred site. Frequently, the impact or effect is perceived on abstract but highly valued aspects of people’s lives, such as community identity, stability, and sustainability. The type of community and how people define themselves can be altered by water-related decisions. For example, entire communities were established when construction camps, irrigated agriculture, and industries based on hydropower (e.g., aluminum) provided opportunities to live in new areas. Some Native American Tribes faced the prospect of cultural extinction when the salmon runs in the Northwest or the Cui-tui in the Pyramid Lake were threatened. There are many more ways that water-related decisions affect tribes.

Measure social changes

Like any other impacts (biological, physical, or economic), social impacts have to be identified and measured. The focused social assessment helps us recognize social changes resulting from new projects, measure the changes taking place, and determine which changes are significant. This realistically appraises possible social ramifications and suggests project alternatives and possible mitigation² measures. Social analysts ask:

- ▲ What existing social conditions will be disrupted or displaced?
- ▲ Who depends on the resources that Reclamation provides? Who are the direct and indirect users of the resources?
- ▲ Which individuals, groups, and communities will be affected (either positively or negatively)?
- ▲ Are there any adverse impacts? What is the magnitude of the impact of the project on various interested and affected groups (particularly vulnerable and under-represented groups)? Are funds available and are there plans to mitigate identified social impacts?
- ▲ Are there equity (environmental justice) implications?
- ▲ How do various interested and affected groups view these impacts? What will these impacts mean to these stakeholders?

Effective social analysis provides social assessments that help answer these questions. Answers increase knowledge for both Reclamation and the affected community and put decisionmakers and citizens in a better position to understand the broader implication of the alternatives for a proposed action. An effective social assessment will:

- ▲ Alert the planner and the project proponent (through the social analyst) to the likelihood of social impacts
- ▲ Help individuals, communities, government agencies, and private sector organizations anticipate the possible social consequences of a decision on human populations
- ▲ Provide the decisionmaker information to understand the possible consequences on communities from alternatives for action or policy change

"By simply being aware of the changes likely to occur, the community and its leaders will be better able to cope with change" (Burdge and Robertson, 1990).

"Social impacts actually begin the day the action is proposed and can be measured from that point."

"Real, measurable, and often significant effects on the human environment can begin as soon as there are changes in social or economic conditions" (Burdge, 1999, p. 24).

² Note that in some cases, mitigation is required by court rulings or legislation.

Analyze social impacts that occur during the decision process

Working with leaders directly as the program evolves can solve problems more effectively as they emerge.

Social assessment analyzes a continually changing landscape of impacts that occur before a decision is reached. Individuals, families, groups, and communities are changing resources that plan and move with problems and the solutions. People respond to possible changes before the change is made. For example, if a federal agency announces an action that might include removing a dam, property values around the reservoir might fall, because the lake view and surface recreation are threatened.

Decisionmakers need to be kept informed of these reactions and impacts to plan a process to reach effective solutions in the least disruptive way possible.

Examine the effectiveness of a solution

The best technical solutions will fail if the local support and social infrastructure is not in place. Social analysis addresses the questions that help determine how effective an alternative will be:

- ▲ Are there adequate plans and resources to ensure the community (as well as Reclamation) can support and maintain the solution?
- ▲ Have we identified all the interested and affected publics?
- ▲ Are the project objectives consistent with the needs, interests, and resources/constraints of the interested or affected groups?
- ▲ What are the alternatives' social benefits and costs?
- ▲ Are there social and cultural factors within the community that might limit its ability to participate in or benefit from the alternative's proposed operations or facilities?
- ▲ What are the social risks or factors that might affect the success of the alternative?

Help develop effective alternatives

Social analysts use the measurements of social change and community analyses to understand and interpret the consequences of alternatives. Decisionmakers and team leaders in Reclamation should use the information from the assessment in developing and refining strategies to involve all community members in responding to change by:

- ▲ Developing alternatives to meet the objectives and determining the full range of consequences for each alternative
- ▲ Seeking an approach to understand the importance of both the financial imperatives and the community's "way of life" as reflected in the assessment of values and needs
- ▲ Acknowledging the positive and negative consequences of change so that Reclamation and the community can deal with the situation in an open manner
- ▲ Outlining steps Reclamation and the community can incorporate into the alternatives to enhance the positive and minimize the negative aspects of change

A good social assessment strengthens community response to social change through a better understanding and awareness of its consequences so that change becomes a positive experience for the impacted community.

When should Reclamation do social assessments?

We do social assessments when we want to learn about and understand the consequences of some project, activity or policy on human populations and human communities. It may be for a large program where many states (and international agencies) work together to determine river operations and water allocations. Or it may be for a small project such as building a canal to avoid flooding a wildlife refuge.

Social assessments may be required by law and policy, including:

- ▲ The National Environmental Policy Act is triggered when federal funds, land, and legislation is involved. NEPA requires assessing the human environment (Public Law [P.L.] 91—190-42 U.S.C. Sec 4332).
- ▲ The *Economic and Environmental Principles and Guidelines for Water and Related Land Resources Implementation Studies* from the Water Resources Council, March 10, 1983, are Reclamation's planning principles. These require four tests for viability, including acceptability and four accounts, including the Other Social Effects Account—usually referred to as the social account.

Assessments of any kind . . . social, economic, technological, health, environmental, etc. are another way of saying, "look before you leap!"

- ▲ Section 3 of the Social Analysis Directives and Standards³ explains when social assessments are required in Reclamation. See Reclamation Manual at <<http://www.usbr.gov/recman>>.

Or the assessment may simply be seen as prudent (e.g., evaluating the positive and negative benefits of promoting tourism to a Native American sacred site on Reclamation property).

In short, doing social assessments becomes a way of thinking about how change will take place and how solutions to the problem will change the life of the community.

Who produces social assessments?

Social analysts (also called social impact assessment [SIA] practitioners) are technical specialists with training and experience in social analysis. Usually, they work as part of an interdisciplinary technical team. With their social analysis background, they are adept at measuring and interpreting how individuals and communities respond to social change. They are also proficient at identifying interactions among groups and projecting potential impacts of identified alternatives on communities.

Knowledge and training required

Social analysts must understand concepts, methods and analytical procedures used in social analysis and how these relate to government decision processes.

The social analyst acts as Reclamation's conscience to find out about the impacts on people and to analyze their voices in the decision process.

It is assumed that their background in social science, training, and experience has enough breadth and depth to allow them to design and conduct an assessment and communicate those results to decisionmakers and publics.

Wherever the social assessment is done—within Reclamation or with a cooperating agency or through a contractor—the social analyst should have a masters degree in the appropriate social science (e.g., sociology, geography, psychology, or anthropology) or an equivalent level of experience performing social impact assessments as a component of environmental impact statements.

The analyst should have a background in analyzing primary and secondary data. To meet Reclamation's needs, an understanding of how the agency works; its mission related to water resources, water use and water laws in the West; and the contributions of related disciplines is also useful.

³ At the time of printing, these are in draft form. They will be posted on the Reclamation Manual site and updated in Appendix 1-A when final.

Social analysts should also have experience in working with interdisciplinary teams, as the social assessment will be an integral part of an overall, multidisciplinary analysis. (See “What is the social analyst’s role in interdisciplinary teams” later in this chapter.)

Skills and abilities required

Social analysts do not advocate a single viewpoint or perspective but must understand and analyze the positions and viewpoints within diverse communities and within Reclamation. They translate the communities’ values into social impacts and considerations that the decisionmaker can understand and use to help weigh tradeoffs in the decision process. Social analysts must understand the history, lifestyles, and values of the people living in the study area. They need the skills to:

- ▲ Focus data gathering on relevant issues
- ▲ Analyze and interpret social values as they relate to water and the proposed action and alternatives in the particular area and communities
- ▲ Systematically analyze these data to show decisionmakers the consequences and tradeoffs of alternative actions

Social analysts thus straddle two worlds: the publics’ and the decisionmakers’.

Principles to follow

Social analysts follow a basic code of principles:

- ▲ Take professional and personal responsibility for the extent and accuracy of their assessments
- ▲ Recognize and respect the knowledge of people and groups potentially affected by an existing condition or a proposed action and alternatives
- ▲ Establish credibility to obtain and keep the trust and confidence of key informants
- ▲ Be highly conscious of psychological and organizational dynamics (both internal and external)

(Also see Guidelines and Principles for Social Impact Analysis detailed in Burdge, 1998, p. 117. Chapter 3 in this volume provides more information on ensuring social analyses follow these principles.)

What is the social analyst's role in interdisciplinary teams?

People bring issues to the social analyst who in turn brings these issues to the team.

The social analyst is part of an interdisciplinary team that considers interrelated impacts of a proposed action.

The social analyst also identifies stakeholder interests and participates as a team member in identifying priorities and issues. The analyst uses public input to determine what issues and resources the publics deem important. The technical team provides an analysis that demonstrates the potential effect of a proposed action or alternative. Thus the social analyst forms a bridge between the team and affected communities.

Working as a part of a team

Reclamation uses interdisciplinary teams to explore ways of solving problems in planning, resource management, operation, environmental enhancement, and basin-wide studies. Each technical discipline gathers, analyzes, and shares relevant information to provide an overall picture of tradeoffs and impacts of a proposed action.

As part of the team, the social analyst identifies and analyzes current and potential impacts to determine what is socially relevant. Social analysts must work with all team members to analyze input from other disciplines, participants, and stakeholders about the technical, biological, and economic issues. Social analysts determine how to interpret impacts and results from other disciplines in view of the communities' values, social structure, and population change. (See the next subsection on synthesizing implications.)

Team members work together to show the interrelationships among impacts and ensure that analyses and indicators are consistent throughout each discipline. (See Reclamation's Social Assessment Directives and Standards 4B in the Reclamation Manual and in Appendix 1-A.)⁴ Decisionmakers can make informed choices and publics can understand the impacts and rationale for the decisions.

Synthesizing results

All impacts are interrelated (e.g., reservoir elevations can affect recreation, which in turn affects land development, which could lead to population changes and alterations in local social institutions and cultures). In the same way, increased population leads to changes in biological ecosystems, water use, water quality, etc. Social assessments synthesize the impacts from other disciplines to show what these interrelationships mean to the human communities.

⁴ At the time of printing these are in draft form. They will be updated on the Reclamation Manual site and in Appendix 1-A when final.

For example, to analyze the changing operations on the Marble Springs Dam⁵ the social analyst on the team looked at the following issues in the town of Marble Springs and surrounding community in the Crystal River Valley:

- ▲ **Hydrology.**—Water supplies are crucial to maintaining a commercial, residential, and industrial base. The amount of available instream flows and quality of the water will influence any future development in the valley, thus limiting or facilitating the population growth in Marble Springs.
- ▲ **Recreation.**—Increased water-related tourism may change the economic and cultural base, thus improvements in recreation facilities or water quality may increase numbers of seasonal residents.
- ▲ **Biology.**—Improving habitat for endangered species may reduce land available for development or certain recreational activities. On the other hand, providing water for fish may enhance nonconsumptive values and improve related recreation.
- ▲ **Facilities.**—Building a water treatment facility may bring temporary workers into the town, which would affect schools and the availability of housing, and it would expose residents to a “different way of life.”

Knowing these interrelationships is crucial to balanced decisionmaking; the answers lie not in the physical developments but in how these developments affect people’s lives.

At the end of the technical analysis, the social analyst provides the perspectives from interested and affected people and explains what these impacts mean to their cultures, communities, and ways of life. These perspectives help decisionmakers understand how the alternatives will change the communities, thus giving a better understanding of the tradeoffs and implications to consider as part of their decision. See the section on what do social assessments do earlier in this chapter.

A multidisciplinary team brings a range of skills, experience, and viewpoints to solving problems. A multidisciplinary approach is required under NEPA law.

⁵ See Appendix 2-A in Volume 2 for a detailed description of this composite case study.

How public involvement and social assessments fit together

Social analyses and public involvement processes fulfill interrelated functions in the decision process.

- ▲ Social analyses (like environmental analyses) provide a technical analysis of how proposed actions and alternatives in a resource will change the lives of people in the impacted community.
- ▲ Public involvement provides input into the decision process and helps build consent⁶ for a solution.

"People will not support what they do not understand. They will not understand what they are not involved in." (Public involvement maxim)

Social analysis interprets impacts in terms of how people are affected, and whether the program addresses their needs and fits with their values. Through tradeoff and impact analysis, social assessments put the publics' views and concerns into perspective for the decisionmakers and publics. The team, publics, and decisionmakers can use these results to understand impacts and effectiveness of alternatives. Sharing the results of social analysis (in social assessments) with the affected publics helps all participants understand why and how decisions are made. The public involvement process may be a source of data on affected publics and issues which can be used to measure social impact variables.

Reclamation's Policies and Directives and Standards on public involvement and on social assessment spell out the different responsibilities. See CMP P03 Public Involvement in Reclamation Activities in the Reclamation Manual <<http://www.usbr.gov/recman/cmp/cmp-p03.pdf>>. These characterize public involvement:

- ▲ Public involvement gives interested and affected groups and individuals a way to provide input to the decision process. Consultation helps to build an open and fair process that provides opportunities for publics to communicate their concerns and values. Involving people in the decision process lets them understand the alternatives and voice their concerns and views.
- ▲ Public involvement may also tap local or indigenous knowledge about the alternatives. Proponents are often from outside the area and, therefore, have not lived through the area's history.
- ▲ Public involvement can help identify problems associated with the alternatives, identify interested and affected groups in the scoping process, and get their input on the key issues.

⁶ Consent. The necessary level of agreement to support and carry out a solution. This is not unanimous consensus, which is more difficult to obtain. See <<http://www.usbr.gov/guide/consent.htm>>

The process can help to identify costs, especially those outside of the project that might otherwise be overlooked. Public involvement increases credibility and acceptance by providing a way for communities to participate in the decisionmaking process.

- ▲ Public involvement occurs continuously throughout the life of a successful project—from planning and development, through implementation, and finally through the mitigation and monitoring stages.

Caution. Public involvement is an interactive process that allows interested and affected publics to have a say in the decision process. Social impact assessment results from a scientific method based on comparative analysis. Public involvement does not take the place of but supports a social and environmental and impact assessment.

Public involvement and social analysis work “hand in glove” to the point that they must be planned together as part of the decision process to avoid duplicating efforts and to ensure consistency. A good public involvement plan and social analysis plan will answer:

- ▲ How will information be gathered (e.g., how meetings, discussions, and other contacts with the various publics will be conducted)?
- ▲ How will we coordinate and communicate internally (e.g., how information will be shared)?

Public involvement is a vital component of the entire decision process, which cannot be done without input from the potentially impacted community. However, it is important to remember that public involvement is just one of many approaches used to gather information within the social analysis process (see Burdge, 1998, pp. 183-192).

How social and economic assessments fit together

Social and economic analysts work together to provide a more complete picture of project impacts and often use the same information, (e.g., family/living wages, population changes, and property values) but interpret the outcome in different ways.

Economic assessments measure the benefits and costs of an action in monetary terms. The measurements are usually based on data from secondary sources or based on theoretical models. The results from economic analyses also serve as important inputs to the social

assessment. The two work together—although dollars are often used as the common denominator of decisionmaking⁷ (e.g., the flow of dollars may be used as an indicator of the number of jobs created by the alternative).

Social assessments recognize and explain the benefits and costs of the proposed action and alternatives in terms of communities and individuals. Social assessments emphasize the effects of an action on the quality of life in a human environment. Value-driven social assessments evaluate actions in terms of personal, community, social, and cultural values which go far beyond monetary values.

The difference between monetary and social impacts is akin to the difference between the loss of cherished properties and an insurance check for the market value of these goods. There are some values that cannot be expressed in dollars. When a town is inundated and its residents are dispersed, the monetary value of homes lived in for those generations does not measure the human cost or place a value on the history, family, and community. The “taking” of a fourth generation home may be discussed in the community for generations long after the monetary impacts have been mitigated.

Chapter 1 outlined why social analyses are needed in the decision process and how social analysis fits into an overall multidisciplinary decision process. We have talked about how social assessments can help identify problems, refine alternatives, and analyze impacts to communities to help identify successful solutions.

⁷ See National and Regional Economic Development accounts in Economic and Environmental Principles and Guidelines for Water and Related Land Resources Implementation Studies, Water Resources Council, 1983. Also note the contrast with the Other Social Effects Account, which deals with non-monetary tradeoff analysis.

CHAPTER 2: SOCIAL ANALYSIS IN THE STEPS OF THE DECISION PROCESS

This chapter provides details about doing social analysis at different stages in the life cycle of a project from planning through operation and eventual adaptation, abandonment, or decommissioning.

The second portion of this chapter shows how social assessments fit within Reclamation's decision processes. Social analysis, like the decision process, is based on the rational planning process. The social analysis process helps ensure that proposed solutions are acceptable and sustainable.

Analyses of operations, relicensing, and potential decommissioning will be important for Reclamation in the early decades of the 21st century.

Social analysis throughout a project's life

Social analysis is done from beginning planning stages through implementing through operating and changing operations, including terminating or decommissioning. Reclamation proposes actions and plans (and does corresponding impact studies, including NEPA compliance processes) at many of the stages throughout a project's life. These studies can be complex, multi-phased efforts covering all operations, or focused studies on a single component of the project.

Social impacts occur throughout the decision process and the life of the selected action. Decisionmakers and the community need to understand what is likely to happen at each stage of development process throughout the decision process and the life of the program or project. Figure 2.1 is a simplified graphic showing idealized project stages.

"Social assessment is a series of research and analytic activities that have different objectives at different stages of the particular decisionmaking process being implemented"
(Branch, et al., 1984, p. 1).

Figure 2.1 Simplified diagram of stages in project/policy development



Table 2.1 shows the life stages in the fictitious Marble Springs project⁸, followed by impacts identified during the social analysis process, and some of the responses by the affected community, followed by how the knowledge gained from the social assessment was used to identify, avoid, or mitigate significant social impacts.

⁸ This fictional project case study was created for this manual. A detailed description is in Volume 2, Appendix 2-A.

Table 2.1— Type of possible social impacts at different life stages of project

Life stage	Examples of impacts identified during the social analysis process	Consequences of identified impacts	Examples of how the social assessment can help identify, avoid, or mitigate these impacts.
<p>Planning/ policy development</p> <p><i>Social assessments help refine alternatives and ensure their success</i></p>	<p>Land prices in the Crystal River Valley soared based on rumors of project benefits. Businesses located in the proposed inundation area lost value.</p> <p>Proposals for the damsite called for relocating a nearby town and several ranches. Families lived with the uncertainty of relocating as planning continued for 10 years. Several families could not sell their land or retire. Owners of stores and a small manufacturing plant could not make decisions about whether to expand or relocate, affecting the town's economic base.</p>	<p>Speculation on potential impacts may be misinterpreted and have real consequences.</p> <p>Indecision about actions may hinder private-sector decisions.</p>	<p>Social analysis recognizes the potential for misunderstandings, and helps to communicate with communities to avoid speculation.</p> <p>Reclamation relocation plans are expedited to provide information to potentially affected people and businesses early in the planning process.</p>
	<p>The communities polarized around speculation on potential impacts, which might be avoided as part of the planning process. Townspeople were concerned that 75 trucks a day would go through main street. Groups in the community were not able to come together in developing an agreed upon position regarding the project.</p>	<p>Interest groups will emerge. Attitudes will form toward the project.</p>	<p>Social analysis provides information to the community to put impacts into perspective. Knowing that only ten trucks a day would be passing through town helped keep impacts from being blown out of proportion. Social analysts help the team optimize alternatives to avoid impacts—alternative truck routes were found and travel times were restricted.</p>
<p>Implementation</p> <p><i>Social assessments help monitor impacts and changes to the community</i></p>	<p>While the town had always been a mining town with a boom/bust economy, Marble Springs did not have the infrastructure to handle the influx of construction workers. The temporary population changes obligated the town to support infrastructure improvements (e.g., transportation, schools, and housing) that the remaining population could not support after the construction workforce left. The community's short term reactions did not provide the needed planning and infrastructure to accommodate the changes</p>	<p>Physical construction of a project brings changes such as influx of construction workers, relocation of people, and noise disturbances. Institutional changes may affect planning needs and zoning. Both types of changes will bring impacts such as community conflict and dislocation, influx of new residents, and changes in land values, community power structure, and community infrastructure.</p>	<p>By projecting potential impacts and coordinating with local interests, the community is able to plan for the arrival and departure of the construction workforce. Changes in the community are planned to improve the area and provide long-term stability for the community.</p> <p>As a project is being implemented, monitoring may be necessary to identify unforeseen impacts and make sure that actions are going as planned.</p> <p>Monitoring will indicate if mitigation is appropriate.</p>

Table 2.1— Type of possible social impacts at different life stages of project

Life stage	Examples of impacts identified during the social analysis process	Consequences of identified impacts	Examples of how the social assessment can help identify, avoid, or mitigate these impacts.
<p>Operation and maintenance / restructuring</p> <p><i>Social assessments provide the basis for analysis to identify the impacts of change</i></p>	<p>Marble Springs Dam provided irrigation water for the farmers to expand farms and add farm workers. The community changed from mining to farming. Opportunities to obtain water were to be equitably distributed.</p> <p>Operations at the Marble Springs Dam focused on releases for power production, meeting irrigation needs, and municipal and industrial demands.</p>	<p>At first during the development period, the new project changes social and economic conditions. Some changes will continue into the long term.</p> <p>After the development period, water and resource use will become stabilized. Proposals for changes in project operations (to cope with changes in water needs) may have significant social impacts.</p>	<p>Monitoring may be needed to ensure the project fulfills its purposes.</p> <p>After a project is in place, a post-audit study may be needed to determine if the project is fulfilling its purposes.</p>
<p>Operation and maintenance / restructuring - continued</p> <p><i>Social assessments provide the basic indicators to identify the impacts of change</i></p>	<p>The Crystal River Valley has completed its 50-year contract, and renewal negotiations cover new issues and needs, such as fish flows. The community is concerned that changes in distribution of water will affect the economic base of the town. As the economic base evolved from mining and agriculture to services related to tourist trade and new high tech industries, the community's water needs also changed in ways not envisioned by the planners.</p> <p>With the establishment of the State Park on the reservoir, recreation became a major use although it was not originally a project purpose. The community views the reservoir as the central focus of a booming tourist industry. Fluctuations in the lake level are viewed as a severe impact on the tourist trade.</p> <p>Providing optimal fish flows to recover a species threatened by flow patterns will directly affect power revenues and the availability of water for the original project purposes. Fluctuation in reservoir levels will increase with the proposed optimal fish flows.</p>	<p>Impacts on stakeholders related to existing project purposes will need to be contrasted with opportunities created for new uses.</p> <p>Water distribution may affect community stability and sustainability.</p> <p>Tourist industry may decline, which may lower income levels, cause people to move out, stifle growth, and lower property values.</p> <p>Original project purposes may not have as much water available as in the past. Power revenues may decline and irrigators may not have water to sustain cropping patterns. Farming and community stability may decline.</p>	<p>By putting impacts in perspective and assisting other water users to conserve and more fully use their allotment (e.g., canal lining), water use is optimized and impacts minimized.</p> <p>Water needs must be analyzed and adjustments may be needed.</p> <p>Resource management plans provide for planned changes. By showing social values and impacts, social assessments can clarify priorities and refine alternatives for better use planning.</p> <p>Changes in storage, deliveries, and flows lead to changes in water use among communities. Social analysis demonstrates that by regulating flows, Reclamation could provide more white water rafting opportunities and enhance fish flows at the same time, thus providing more diverse recreation and small business opportunities.</p>

Table 2.1— Type of possible social impacts at different life stages of project

Life stage	Examples of impacts identified during the social analysis process	Consequences of identified impacts	Examples of how the social assessment can help identify, avoid, or mitigate these impacts.
Decommission (Abandonment) <i>Social assessments help understand the changing circumstances and refine alternatives</i>	Marble Springs Reservoir has become increasingly filled with sediment and no longer provides the storage needed. The dam no longer functions to fit the intended purpose. Further, Reclamation has identified safety of dams concerns. The community is polarized by the prospect of removing the dam. The community is concerned that roads in the area will not be able to cope with heavy truck traffic.	Dams may need to be breached or removed. Demands for land, water, and other resources change. Community infrastructure, institutions, and economics change. Structural changes may be required to breach the dam.	Social analysis determines what social benefits the dam provides and what will be provided by its removal. Social analysis explains the tradeoff between safety benefits and stakeholder benefits and finds that stakeholder benefits have declined drastically.
			Social analysis uses the same techniques in studying construction and implementation impacts. Results of the social assessment can be used with public involvement to inform the community of pending infrastructure changes and help find alternative solutions.
	The community is concerned about water supplies, the potential loss of jobs, and people leaving as the benefits of Marble Springs Dam will no longer be present.	Breaching or removing the dam may release sediments that will affect the town's water supply and treatment plant. Physically removing the dam brings impacts similar to construction.	While the dam is still functioning, stakeholder impacts will require analysis to determine lost benefits and impacts under each alternative. Social assessments can put the impacts of the stakeholders and the community in perspective.

Social assessment tasks in Reclamation's decision process

The decision processes aren't single events, but repeating or iterative processes at each stage of a project's life. Social assessments and environmental impact assessments are two types of input to the decision process for a project.

Reclamation's Decision Process Guidebook, How to Get Things Done at <http://www.usbr.gov/guide> provides a recommended approach to decisionmaking that emphasizes finding and implementing solutions. The Decision Process Guidebook presents a flexible, adaptable approach to decisionmaking that focuses on what needs to be done and what works within a context of constant change and diverse social and cultural groups. Teams use this framework for their decision process and a checklist to ensure that they have a proper, well analyzed foundation to build support which has been shown to successfully solve problems.

Going through the decision process steps with the team as outlined in the Decision Process Guidebook will help keep the process on track and ensure that all areas are covered. Keep in mind that the decision process is not a linear, lock-step process as many steps happen simultaneously. Actions are not usually in discrete phases—the social analyst may be talking to the community before the input from other team members is available and fatal flaws may be discovered early on, thus eliminating some alternative solutions. Data collection and analysis starts from the beginning of the decision process and continues through the evaluation.

Table 2.2 relates specific social assessment tasks to the steps in the Decision Process Guidebook. This table will guide you through the decision process from the social analyst's perspective and how the social assessment contributes to the process. The steps in table 2.2 provide a framework for integrating and organizing social analysis information and can be the basis for developing a statement or scope of work (See Volume 2: Social Analysts's Guide to Doing Social Analysis, chapter 5, section, Outline for a social assessment plan). This table is only provided as general guidance. The realities of a specific program or project may vary considerably from the example presented here.

The social analysis assesses the response of the affected community. Humans are the only resource that can plan and consciously change as the process evolves. Thus, the role of the social analyst differs from any other technical discipline.

Table 2.2—Social analysis tasks in the decision process

Step in the Decision Process Process Guidebook	Team Process	Social Assessment Input
<p>Foundation</p> <p><i>Assemble players, authority, and funding. Plan the study.</i></p>	<p>Before starting a project, planners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify problems and examine contexts to get funding and authority • Make sure the problem is defined, the context and ground rules are agreed upon, and players are in place 	<p>Social analysts within Reclamation have a key role in identifying problems in the area and possible responses to a problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the team leader and coordinate with the public involvement team, and other team members to develop an effective plan to identify, involve, and analyze input from all potential participants. • Document how potentially affected publics were identified. • Help identify ways each affected public might be involved in the decision process. Use public involvement techniques discussed in TSC's Public Involvement Manual, 2001. <p>Summarize previous studies. Sketch out issue maps (zones of influence on a map that also shows political boundaries, topographic features, and project features).</p> <p>Develop community profiles.</p>
<p>Needs</p> <p><i>Develop problem identification and needs assessment.</i></p>	<p>The team looks at the overall needs and issues in the area and determines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the problem? • What is causing the problem? • How big a problem is it? • What level of information do we need? • Whose needs will a solution meet? 	<p>Begin to develop a file on the affected community and identify key informants. Social analysts help the team understand the cultural context and the decision processes within an affected community as soon as possible.</p> <p>Get information from project proponents and opponents; team members, Reclamation staff, publics, previous studies, Congress (legislative history, staffers, legal requirements), etc. Use secondary information, agency records. Ask key informants and knowledgeable individuals. Review previous surveys and actions. Use the information to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify interested and affected publics and their concerns • Systematically discuss issues with representatives from each affected group • Assess community needs • Look at the potential conflicts
<p>Objectives</p> <p><i>The team and decisionmakers determine the objectives—those needs that your proposed action may help to meet.</i></p>	<p>The team works with the decisionmaker to determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What issues will be addressed? How do Reclamation's objectives mesh with needs in the affected communities? • How does this program or project fit with other activities going on in the community (both in and outside of Reclamation)? 	<p>In view of project objectives and scope:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the primary and secondary zones of influence for the proposed objectives or actions • Review previous studies and previously identified issues and interested and affected publics to determine the depth of the social assessment needed • Determine the type and level of information about social impacts that decisionmakers will need to make a decision on the proposed action or alternatives • Develop a study design in conjunction with other team members

Table 2.2—Social analysis tasks in the decision process

Step in the Decision Process Process Guidebook	Team Process	Social Assessment Input
<p>Resources/ Constraints</p> <p>Analyze affected environment and potential resources. Identify potential constraints on actions.</p>	<p>The team and decisionmakers determine what resources can be used, zones of influence of the proposed action or alternatives, who and what will be affected, and what the boundaries of the study are. These resources determine how you will be able to meet the objectives.</p>	<p>To focus the assessment on what will affect the proposed actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore existing databases within Reclamation and studies done by other agencies, related actions, academic institutions, etc., to determine what information is available • Begin to identify crucial data gaps and try to fill them • Analyze problems and needs relevant to the decision and the setting and the relevant human communities/zones of influence and set the baseline • Identify institutional, organizational, and other constraints in these communities
<p>Options</p> <p>Identify as many options as possible to address the objectives.</p>	<p>To develop a large list of possible options, teams use data from a wide variety of sources and analyses, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past proposals and analytical results • Current analyses • Professional judgment • Public involvement process • Local groups, task forces, and community forums • Representatives or key informants in the affected community 	<p>Identify the social issues needed to ensure objectives are met and suggests ways to address these needs.</p> <p>Ensure that social needs and community-generated options are considered.</p>
<p>Screening criteria</p> <p>Screen all the options for fatal flaws (factor that makes the option impossible to implement).</p>	<p>The team determines what would constitute a fatal flaw, eliminates unworkable options using consistent measures, and documents the rationale.</p>	<p>To ensure that fatal flaws have been identified, the social analyst carefully considers the history of federal or agency interaction and why past proposals were rejected by the local community. The analyst also examines similar projects to identify potential problems.</p> <p>Use the knowledge gained about the current community to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider social impacts and acceptability to determine the thresholds where potential impacts would be a fatal flaw for an option. (For example, desecration of a sacred site would be a fatal flaw. An influx of more than 100 people in a town of 1,000 might be a fatal flaw, whereas adding the same number in a city of 100,000 might not be.) • Document why identified flaws should be considered as a screening criteria. • Determine what impacts would require mitigation—and the willingness on the part of Reclamation and the impacted communities to commit to mitigation. The lack of resources for mitigation could be considered a fatal flaw if the action is unacceptable without the mitigation.

Table 2.2—Social analysis tasks in the decision process

Step in the Decision Process	Team Process	Social Assessment Input
<p>Alternatives</p> <p>Combine workable options into a range of complete alternatives. Always include the no-action alternative.</p>	<p>Determine how to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximize positive impacts and minimize, avoid, or mitigate negative impacts Build in flexibility where outcomes are not certain <p>Define a set of reasonable alternatives that correspond with the identified issues and concerns</p> <p>Identify data requirements needed to fully describe and analyze the alternatives so interested and affected publics, decisionmakers, and potential implementers understand the alternatives.</p>	<p>Social assessments play a key role in refining alternatives to determine how adverse impacts can be overcome, avoided, or mitigated, thereby ensuring that project objectives and alternatives are acceptable to affected publics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze alternatives for social components (options in the alternatives that meet needs or affect communities—issues, concerns, variables, and factors) Incorporate social factors into the assessment plan Provide initial input on social values and strengths in the community and work with all team members to propose and refine alternatives
<p>Evaluation</p> <p>Analyze the alternatives to determine tradeoffs and benefits.</p>	<p>The team uses a combination of analytical procedures to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the data and information gathered and estimate likely impacts under all alternatives. Using professional expertise, develop evaluation criteria to rank the desirability of each alternative Weigh tradeoffs and compare alternatives based on this criteria. 	<p>After obtaining a technical understanding of the alternatives, the social analyst provides an alternative impact analysis on the human environment by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determining the significant social impact variables from the social assessment Examining similar projects to help identify evaluation factors that may be significant Identifying the full range of probable social impacts and projecting future social conditions for each alternative. The comparison is to the future without or the baseline conditions Determining the significance of each identified social impact <p>As part of the analysis, consider both Reclamation's and affected publics perceptions of impacts. Some publics may perceive an impact to be significant, while analysis shows that impacts will not be significant. Analyzing this perceived impact may be necessary to show the full extent (or insignificance) of this impact.</p>
<p>Selection</p> <p>Decide on the plan (the proposed action).</p>	<p>The team presents the results of the analyses to the decisionmaker. The decisionmaker then selects a workable alternative and explains the rationale to the agency and the interested and affected parties.</p>	<p>Prepare documents to share information with the team, participants, affected groups, and the decisionmakers. These will often consist of tables and narrative describing the beneficial and adverse social effects of alternatives and associated tradeoffs. These documents range from informal presentations to formal documentation including Other Social Effects Accounts, social well-being accounts, and social assessments. These documents should show the methods and results from the evaluation.</p>

Table 2.2—Social analysis tasks in the decision process

Step in the Decision Process Guidebook	Team Process	Social Assessment Input
<p>Implementation</p> <p><i>Put the plan into action.</i></p>	<p>Team members usually change at this point to responsible implementers. The project is implemented and must be monitored to ensure that the objectives are being met.</p>	<p>Reclamation needs to determine social impacts during the implementation and operational stages of the selected action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address uncertainty by monitoring impacts during implementation, if appropriate • Determine if new indicators need to be used to monitor changing situations • Based on available resources, work directly with the local publics and affected groups to ensure the intent of the program is carried out • Use the public involvement effort and communicate to continually assess project impacts
<p>Follow up</p> <p><i>Monitor to ensure the solution continues to work by providing for maintenance and operation of physical structures and administration of institutional solutions.</i></p>	<p>The team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implements a monitoring program that can identify unanticipated impacts and changes resulting from implementing the proposed action • Periodically examines the situation and modifies the solution when necessary • Pays attention to monitoring programs to ensure they are effective, appropriately designed, and consider human impacts • Recognizes the potential for surprises <p>The team takes the knowledge gained to other processes by answering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How good was the assessment? How can we make it better? • What insights can we take to the next project or program? 	<p>The social analyst can help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the community participates in both the mitigating and monitoring process as well as throughout the decision process • Determine how both the community and the individuals have adapted to change • Incorporate the data into a feedback process so policies, decisions, and programs can respond to changing conditions • Compare the actual and predicted social, economic, and bio-physical impacts • Comparisons are based on relevant indicators which were measured before implementing (see the Evaluation step) <p>Monitoring studies during impact or post-audit studies may be conducted. However, Reclamation does not usually conduct these studies unless the local communities request and or fund them to deal with specific problems or the solution incorporates adaptive management.</p>

Much of the social analyst's contribution is not recorded in the formal decision document, but comes in interacting with the team and the affected publics. The analyst helps the team, managers, and decisionmakers understand what the community feels is important. These perspectives can help shape alternatives and processes to ensure that the communities will support the solution to the identified problem and what is finally implemented will work.

Chapter 2 has shown how the social analysis is an integrated part of a decision process to reach effective, sustainable, supported solutions. The process adapts to changes because it does not focus on a single action. The process asks the question "How do we best meet water needs?" and then analyzes possible answers (i.e., the proposed action and alternatives) to determine impacts and weigh tradeoffs.

Social assessments are products of this decision process, which will help determine how possible answers affect communities.

CHAPTER 3: ENSURING USEFUL, ACCURATE RESULTS

This chapter provides Reclamation personnel with guidelines and principles to evaluate a proposed social assessment plan as well as a checklist of items to consider in determining if a work plan will really work. Volume 2: Social Analyst's Guide to Doing Social Analysis discusses how to develop a social analysis plan.

Whether a social assessment is done in-house or is contracted, it is essential to ensure that the process is focused, accurate, and produces results that the publics and decisionmakers can use. This chapter is designed as a checklist/guidance for managers, contractors, contracting officials, contracting officer technical representatives, team leaders, and social analysts to determine if the proposed work will actually accomplish the goals:

- ▲ Analyze social impacts for a range of alternatives
- ▲ Help the interested and affected publics and decisionmakers understand what social impacts mean in the daily life of the particular communities involved.

*Good
information
comes from
good planning.*

While each process may have some unique aspects, each social assessment must meet basic standards to ensure that the results are:

- ▲ Usable to make effective, balanced decisions
- ▲ Accurate and objective
- ▲ Comprehensive and consider all interested and affected parties
- ▲ Up to date and reflect the social impacts of the decision process as well as the proposed action and alternatives.

Follow the general principles

Reclamation's policy outlines the general philosophy and principles for social assessment within our agency. Reclamation's Directives and Standards provide mandatory requirements for ensuring that analyses and the resulting assessments follow these principles.⁹

⁹ At the time of printing, these are in draft form. They will be posted on the Reclamation Manual site and updated in Appendix 1-A when final.

The Interorganizational Committee on Guidelines and Principles for Social Impact Assessment was commissioned to develop and agree on guidelines acceptable for U.S. Federal agencies. These Guidelines and Principles for Social Impact Assessment (Interorganizational Committee, 1994) are acceptable for conducting a social assessment. The process translates easily into benchmarks that can be used to compare plans for a social assessment, actions taken, and results produced. Table 3.1 compares these principles with a list of questions contracting officers, managers, and others can use to evaluate a social assessment plan or action to ensure useful, relevant results.

Social assessment textbooks cite the need to focus on significant impacts, use appropriate measures and information, quantify where feasible and appropriate, and present impacts in a way that decisionmakers and community leaders can understand likely social consequences of the proposed action and alternatives. (See Burdge, 1999; Branch et al., 1984; Freudenburg, 1986; and Taylor et al., 1995).

When selecting contractors or consultants, evaluate their staff's background, knowledge, and experience to do the job (institutional capacity). Also evaluate their understanding of the affected populations, as well as their experience with known social assessment tools and methods discussed in the second part of this manual.

Contract proposals and social assessment plans should be ranked and chosen based on how well they fit the guidelines. Table 3.1 can be used as a follow up to help evaluate:

- ▲ How well the plan was followed
- ▲ Whether the analyst followed these principles
- ▲ If the proposed social analysis plan was successfully implemented

Reclamation needs to have access to the best available social analysts. If a qualified person is not available to do the actual work, consider a small contract or service agreement using a qualified social analyst as a reviewer for input on the design of the work and the preliminary results. A qualified person is needed to do the final analysis of impacts and beneficial effects. The same standards should be applied to in-house studies as well.

Table 3.1—General principles for social analysis and benchmark questions and manual references

General principles for social analysis ¹	Benchmark questions	Section in this manual
Involve the diverse public: Identify and involve all potentially affected groups and individuals.	How will you identify groups and individuals? How will you ensure that groups are not missed?	<i>Volume 1: Manager's Guide to Using Social Analysis</i> , Chapter 1, section What is the social analysts role in interdisciplinary teams?
Analyze impact equity: Clearly define who will gain and who will lose, and emphasize vulnerability of under-represented groups.	What measures will you use to determine the thresholds for vulnerable groups and indigenous populations?	<i>Volume 2: Social Analyst's Guide to Doing Social Analysis</i> , Chapter 5, section Focusing the social assessment; Chapter 6, section Choosing your indicators
Focus the assessment: Deal with the relevant and significant issues and public concerns, not those that are just easy to measure.	How will you determine relevance and significance of social impacts and how many factors will you consider?	<i>Volume 2: Social Analyst's Guide to Doing Social Analysis</i> , Chapter 6: Measurements
Identify methods and assumptions and define significance: Describe how the social assessment is conducted, what assumptions are used, and how significance is determined.	What methods will be used? More than one method may be needed to obtain data from a variety of indicators.	<i>Volume 2: Social Analyst's Guide to Doing Social Analysis</i> , Chapter 8, Analysis methods
Provide feedback on social impacts to decisionmakers: Identify problems that could be solved with changes to the alternatives and explain the impacts and tradeoffs of refining alternatives.	What documentation will be used? How will this documentation be made consistent with that of other team members?	<i>Volume 2: Social Analyst's Guide to Doing Social Analysis</i> , Chapter 9, Sharing the results
Use social analysts (practitioners): Trained social scientists using social science methods will provide the best results.	What are the staff qualifications and experience?	<i>Volume 1: Manager's Guide to Doing Social Analysis</i> , Chapter 1, section Who produces social assessments?
Cite data sources: Use published scientific literature and both secondary and primary data from the affected area.	What data sources will be used?	<i>Volume 2: Social Analyst's Guide to Doing Social Analysis</i> , Chapter 7, Data sources
Plan for gaps in the data: Evaluate risk associated with unknown factors and develop a strategy for proceeding.	How will the analysis handle missing data?	<i>Volume 2: Social Analyst's Guide to Doing Social Analysis</i> , Chapter 8, section Dealing with uncertainty
Establish follow up programs: Manage uncertainty by monitoring and mitigating adverse impacts.	How will the effectiveness of the program be measured?	<i>Volume 2: Social Analyst's Guide to Doing Social Analysis</i> , Chapter 8, section Post audit and monitoring analyses

¹ Abstracted from the original Interorganizational Committee on Guidelines and Principles for Social Impact Assessment (Interorganizational Committee, 1994).

Check the work plan

Once there is a plan for doing the social assessment, check it by answering the following:

- ▲ Does the proposed work plan assess the proposed action and alternatives to provide the information needed for decisionmakers?
- ▲ Can the assessment be done in the time and budget allowed?
- ▲ Are there any data gaps in the plan? If so, how will these gaps affect our understanding of the impacts, tradeoffs, and benefits?
- ▲ How flexible is the plan—how will we handle changes in the analysis process?

If the work is done within Reclamation, be sure a peer reviews it. (See the Technical Service Center’s (TSC) Operating Guidelines for more information on peer reviews.) If the work is to be done outside of Reclamation, the contracting officer and the contracting officer technical representative need to make sure that the contract specifies what will be done and that those actions will provide the necessary information. Provide for peer review within the contracting process.

Reality checks with decisionmakers and affected publics are needed to determine:

- ▲ Will the plan enable the social analyst to focus on the relevant and significant impacts?
- ▲ Will this plan get accurate information about the range of social impacts for persons in the affected communities, groups, and institutions?

Checks with the team leader and team members are needed to be sure that the proposed plan is:

- ▲ **Complete.**—Do not exclude any important factor. Leaving out impacts, values, or priorities can create nasty surprises later. Talk with the decisionmakers, team members, partners, project proponents, stakeholders, etc., as a reality check to ensure the proposed analysis will include all the important issues, problems, impacts, and values uncovered in the needs assessment.
- ▲ **Cost effective.**—Do not include any unimportant factor or a factor that will not help determine the impacts and consequences of the alternatives. Focus efforts on relevant information (e.g.,

don't count fireplugs, but determine if an increased population size would require more firefighters to meet community needs). The results should show what impacts are reasonably foreseeable, as well as what is significant and relevant. The social analysis must point out what it is important and how it will change.

- ▲ **Not Redundant.**—Don't double count. For example, including both income and the standard of living will skew results. Higher income leads to a higher standard of living. A plan that increases incomes also will increase standards of living. Thus you will count a double effect when in fact, one indicator measures both.
- ▲ **Measurable.**—Every social assessment variable must have an indicator which can be used in comparative analyses. You should be able to measure each impact and compare it in the context of the alternatives (e.g., groups, times, distances). Your results must also be comparable with the results from other disciplines (e.g., hydrological, biological, recreation, economic). Always ask, "How reliable and valid are your analytical methods?"
- ▲ **Compatible.**—Your analytical approach must be consistent and understood by the other team members. Most teams use indicators to analyze significant issues (e.g., frequency of water service interruptions from drought, reservoir level drawdowns that stop all recreation). Where possible, use indicators from other disciplines as a way of understanding social impacts.
- ▲ **Meaningful.**—You must be able to make meaningful, professional judgments about the impacts. It is critical that impacts be measured in terms that affected publics and decisionmakers will understand. Measures of social assessment variables should relate closely to the personal experiences of the affected publics.
- ▲ **Understandable.**—Results must be presented in a relevant way that can be understood both by the decisionmaker and the affected community.

Chapter 3 provides some useful checks for ensuring an effective and focused social analysis with useful results. These can be used to determine what will be done, document the plan, and check the work

Reclamation's actions will succeed only if they serve the American people and if communities support the actions. Otherwise, we have failed our mission.

Decisionmakers need to know how a particular community will change as a result of Reclamation's actions so they can plan appropriate, successful projects. Changes bring social costs to some and social benefits to others, no matter the size of the community or the nature of the proposed action. Understanding these tradeoffs is one key to weighing alternatives and making balanced, sustainable decisions. Communities need to understand these costs and benefits to make informed comments and contributions to the decision process.

Social analysis provides a systematic approach to measuring:

- ▲ The significant and relevant changes in communities
- ▲ How those changes will affect the people in the area

The social analyst becomes a conduit between the community and Reclamation to translate what the impacts mean to the community, and to help refine alternatives so that the proposed action (and alternative actions) meet the needs with a high probability of success. The social analysis allows the social issues to be considered at every stage of the planning process—not simply after the decision. Alerting the community and Reclamation decisionmakers to the variety of changes that might occur as a result of the project development helps to ensure that the promised benefits are realized and negative consequences are anticipated and addressed.

APPENDIX 1-A: RECLAMATION'S SOCIAL ANALYSIS POLICY AND DIRECTIVES AND STANDARDS

*At the time of printing, these are in draft form.
Contact Thayne Coulter (303) 445-2706 for a
draft copy.*

Make sure that all of your potentially affected interests understand:

1. There IS A serious problem

–or an IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITY
...one that just HAS to be addressed.

2. You are the RIGHT entity to address it

...If fact, . . . IT would be IRRESPONSIBLE for you,
with the MISSION that you have, not to address it..

3. The WAY you are going about it

i.e., the approach you are taking is REASONABLE, SENSIBLE,
RESPONSIBLE.

4. You ARE listening

you DO care . . . about the costs, the negative effects,
the hardships that your actions will cause people.

Acronym List

Volume 1

NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
P.L.	Public Law
SIA	Social Impact Assessment
TSC	Technical Service Center

Volume 2

BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
EA	Environmental Assessment
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FACA	Federal Advisory Committees Act
FWS	Fish and Wildlife Service
GIS	Geographical Information System
ITA	Indian Trust Asset
M&I	municipal and industrial
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
SHPO	State Historical Preservation Office
SIA	Social Impact Assessment
SIC	Standard Industrial Classification
TCP	Traditional Cultural Properties
TSC	Technical Service Center

Department of the Interior

The mission of the Department of the Interior is to protect and provide access to our Nation's natural and cultural heritage and honor our trust responsibilities to tribes.

Bureau of Reclamation

The mission of the Bureau of Reclamation is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

Technical Service Center

The mission of the Technical Service Center is to provide top quality technical services for managing, developing, and protecting water and related resources.