

**Assessing the operational contribution
of social assessment:
Lessons from task team perspectives**

Carine Clert (LCSEO)

Key findings of the Social Assessment Review
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Methodology: An Actor-Oriented Approach

OBJECTIVE: to examine the value added of social assessments in terms of operational relevance

- **Sample:** a subset of a representative sample of projects from QEA2 and QEA3 that were identified as having substantial social inputs during preparation.
- Only 44 operations reviewed due to unavailability of Tteams during time frame
 - 44 interviews with Task managers
 - 25 interviews with Social scientists
 - Quantitative data treated in SPSS

STRUCTURE PRESENTATION

1. Overall Operational relevance
2. Key findings on
 - Social Analysis (Analytical inputs)
 - Participation (processual inputs)
 - 4. Skills inputs/ The Bank SS
3. Emerging issues: Ownership

I. Overall Performance of SA (1): Task teams' perceptions

1. Perceived added value of SA is High

- for 81% of TM: "added a great deal of value"
- lower for Bank SS: 60%

2. Benefits of SA are project-specific

e.g for 89% of TM: improved project design

3. But SA also generate positive externalities

High percentages (>80%) on

e.g better understanding local context

e.g greater stakeholder commitment and ownership

I. (2)

4. Lower percentages (50-60%) on perceived contribution of SA on:

- Sustainability
- Greater interaction among different stakeholders

5. Difficulties: 59% of TM "experienced some problem or downside with SA"

6. Room for improvement:

61% of TM } would make some changes

76% of Bank SS

I (3). Other indicators

- 45 % of SA= evaluated by reviewers as highly satisfactory on operational relevance- (43% satisfactory)
- In 3/4 of operations: recommendations of SA incorporated into project design & implementation
- Almost all SA (42 out of 44) resulted in specific action plans- and this beyond soc. Safeguard plans.
- 84% of SA informed M&E.
- but only 48% of SA fully defined monitoring indicators.

II. Social Analysis

Most S analyses = comprehensive but...

1. Stakeholder analyses need to put more emphasis on "competing interests"
2. Organizational & Institutional analyses: room for improvement in the analysis of "rules and incentives" likely to influence project effectiveness
3. Broad range of social issues identified
 - 47% SA addressed "potential adverse impacts"
 - But Analysis of key exclusion mechanisms = a core element of analysis (e.g. equity-84%/exclusion: 66%)
 - Lack of access to entitlements :key contribution

II. Social Analysis (2)

4. **Social disadvantage: Diversity & complexity overall well captured**
 - SA also brings a poverty angle to non PTI projects
5. **But.. too frequent focus on specific group of beneficiaries e.g. Indigenous peoples / and skip other potential benef. - subject to exclusion due to *other* variables**
 - why? Incentives to T teams to focus on groups identified in safeguard policies
6. **Spatial analysis should be + mainstreamed**

II. (3) Teams: Constraints/Innovative strategies

1. Budget constraints -detrimental to

- Use of quantitative methods
- Targeting
- Credibility in the eyes of the client

2. Client's resistance to collection of sensitive information.

- step-by-step approach
- Well connected local consultants
- Better selling of SA merits to the client

Key lessons to ⇒ operational impact

- **Clearly define objectives of SA before designing research methods and areas of investigation** e.g. Dominican Republic Environ.
- **Combination of quant/qual. methods**
 - Better targeting
 - Better monitoring and evaluation. 78% of the SA which informed M&E (29 out of 37) used mixed methods
- **Collaboration with donors = beneficial**
 - e.g. Poland Rural Environment
- **In-country expertise best combined with Bank SS**

III. Participation

- Substantial Participation ⇒ operational relevance of SA
- Room to strengthen participation in project implementation
- Processes = valued, but products needed
 - Definition of clear objectives matters
 - Participation framework increases perceived impact on empowerment
- Facilitate interaction /stakeholders, esp. in case of conflicts/disagreements
- Design strategies to include vulnerable & poor groups
 - Use innovative participatory methods
 - Identify & address time, cultural and place constraints for participation

IV.(1) Skills Inputs: Focus on the Bank SS

1. Substantial involvement of Bank SS in more than 2-thirds of projects

International Cons: 41% / Local Cons: 95.5%

2. Perceived Valued-Added of Bank SS

→ more knowledge of the Bank's mission & instruments

→ easier to translate findings into operational outputs

⇒ continuity, team-building

IV.(2) Teams' Recommendations

1. More incentives to task managers to create commitment to SA as a factor of project success.
2. Recognize the costs of increasing the poverty reduction capacity of projects at the higher echelons of the decision-making process
3. Broaden the technical profile of SS:
→ e.g. Greater technical knowledge in specific sectors

V. BUILDING-UP SKILLS/ OWNERSHIP:

Client's involvement remains uneven and/or weak in intensity

But there are Difficulties

→ balance with independence of analysis

→ reconcile Clients' writing up SA report and Bank requirements

If Ownership=objective => required resources & activities need to be funded.