

**APPENDIX F:  
GUIDANCE FOR AUTHORS OF CASE SITE BRIEFINGS  
& CASE SITE FACILITATORS**



## APPENDIX F. GUIDANCE FOR AUTHORS OF CASE SITE BRIEFINGS & CASE SITE FACILITATORS

This section provides guidance to case site authors and others who will be facilitating field trips.<sup>1</sup>

This text complements Section 3.4. of this Guide: *Case site identification & field visit preparation*. Read Section 3.4 *before* reading this appendix.

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### REMINDER: IMPORTANCE OF THE CASE SITE VISITS

The case site visits play a central role in this training course. After course participants have been introduced to the basic principles of environmental impact assessment, procedures for environmental screening of activities, and writing an environmental review, they visit field sites to apply the knowledge they have learned. During the two days of time allotted to case site visits and follow-up exercises, the participants prepare:

- a) an environmental review for the case study; and
- b) an environmental monitoring and mitigation plan appropriate to the type and level of impacts that might be anticipated.

To get the most out of the case site visits, participants require high-quality case site briefings (clear, written descriptions of the sites and the exercises to be undertaken), well-informed host to participate in and/or facilitate each exercise, and interaction with local stakeholders. Facilitators must also be available during the field trip to provide descriptions and clarification, and pose questions to challenge participants' understanding.

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### IMPORTANT NOTES FOR CASE SITE FACILITATORS AND HOSTS

1. **Expect questions; don't expect to be able to answer all of them.** Participants are sure to pose questions to you — this should be welcomed. Do not be defensive or concerned, if you do not know the answers. Even in real life environmental review situations, not all answers are known—certainly not by a single individual (this is an opportunity to emphasize the importance of multi-disciplinary coordination and the existence of information tools described in the course.
2. **Remember: this is not a research project.** The goal of the case study is to encourage participants to think systematically about the links between people and the environment, including physical and biological aspects, to identify the right questions to ask, and to observe and predict impacts *qualitatively*. In the time available for the site visits and follow-on exercises, full and detailed answers to questions and analysis *will not be possible*. T

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<sup>1</sup> USAID partners with projects or activities in the vicinity of the course venue are often requested to assist with preparation for and conduct of field trips. They are also typically course participants.

3. **Be adaptive.** The realities and difficulties of field logistics, travel time, and participation of local people, among other issues, often mean that there are no perfect field trip case study sites. We work with what we think will be most instructive. Facilitators should be flexible and proceed in a way that seems most beneficial for the participants (adaptive management of the field visit is a useful concept to keep in mind).
4. **Make the visits more than sight-seeing.** Keep visits from fully operational sites from becoming merely a “sightseeing” exercise. Make sure participants focus on diagnosing the serious and real environmental problems for which the site was chosen, and on the mitigation measures that could be employed to address them.
5. **Keep assumptions reasonable.** Where visits are made to hypothetical/proposed sites, participants will need to make assumptions about the hypothetical/proposed activities. Facilitators must assure that these assumptions are reasonable and sufficient.

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## **THE CASE SITE BRIEFINGS**

The case site briefing is given to participants the day before the site visits. It should provide sufficient information so that participants understand:

- why the (past/current/proposed/hypothetical) activity is being done
- how it will be done (planned, engineered, constructed and operated)
- where it will be located
- who will implement it (various parties may be involved), and
- the timeframe and phasing of component parts.

**Length and level of detail.** Information should not be too detailed: limit the case site briefing to two to three pages plus a map. This is because a key goal of the exercise is to encourage participants to ask questions about project or activity characteristics, and to probe about the natural environment and other dimensions of the activity.

For example, if a haul road would need to be built or a minor road improved in order to implement a particular activity, you might simply allude to the need to bring in materials and let participants determine whether there is an adequate existing road and what the impacts of building or improving one might be.

**Language and audience.** Please be specific and write in ordinary language (do not include logframes or write as if the audience were USAID).

**Illustrative outline.** The following outline is illustrative, and should be adapted as necessary. However, the basic topics it contains should be covered to the best extent possible with the information available to you.

If appropriate, include a site layout, drawing or schematic. (Note: in some cases, it may be best to have the case study group draw their own site layout or schematic.)

1. **Purpose and Need** of Project or Activity
2. **Brief Description** of Activity
3. **Location** (Attach map. May be a sketch map.)

4. **Site Characteristics:** Summarize what you know about the general setting and the specific site, including natural resource characteristics and trends, population characteristics, socio-cultural dimensions and economic activities.
5. **Activity Characteristics:** Provide quantitative or descriptive information, e.g., number of people the activity will serve or involve, kinds of resources to be used, list of construction material, project duration, and how the activity will operate or function. Remember that in some cases you will be using a hypothetical activity, and you can also use hypothetical activity characteristics. If a feasibility study has been prepared, draw information from it. Indicate if associations or other institutional structures will be developed or fostered.
6. **Results Expected:** Indicate what is expected to happen because of the implementation of the project or activity, e.g., more land cultivated; less protected area subject to poaching; more income generated; game guards trained; improved cultivation practices; potable water supplied; microenterprises established; better access, etc. Be specific rather than abstract.
7. **List of Contacts:** List the names and titles of the contacts or names of groups with whom participants can hold discussions.
8. **Attachments:** Provide a location map and/or site map and, if appropriate, a schematic, drawing or plan of how infrastructure or other site development is expected to look.
9. **List of Reports or Data Available:** Indicate which items, if any, you think might be worth having the organizers photocopy.
10. **Remind participants not to raise community expectations regarding future development activities.**

**Sources.** A visit to the site is essential to write the briefing. Grant proposals, concept paper, or other project documents (where they exist) can provide the other information required.

Note: In some cases, large amounts of data are available; in others, there will be very little. If data and/or background documents about the project or a resource survey or study are readily available, provide a copy to the course organizer, so that one or two copies of each can be made for the working group assigned to the case study field site.

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## ***THE FACILITATORS' NOTES***

It is helpful to prepare a separate page of notes to assist facilitators in guiding each case site group. This could include:

- a summary of key impacts associated with the activities under review and means of addressing them,
- a list of suggested questions to pose to participants,
- discussion points for key contacts, etc.

Remember that these notes are for the facilitators' use only, as the objective of the site visit is to have the participants generate their own environmental reviews and environmental mitigation and monitoring plans.

