

28th Annual Meeting of the International Association for Impact Assessment
THE ART AND SCIENCE OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT
IAIA08 Session Chair's Report

Session number and name:

CS2.9 Cultural Heritage and Impact Assessment
CS3.9 Cultural Heritage and Impact Assessment: Workshop

Day: Wednesday **Date:** May 7, 2008 **Time:** 14:00 – 17:30 pm **# Persons attending session:** Sixty (60)

Name(s) of Session Chair(s)

Arlene Fleming
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Contributors

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(a) Three current issues in application of assessment processes discussed in this session

1. The need to improve coverage of the cultural heritage component in Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), and Environmental Management Plans (EMP)
2. The need to integrate cultural heritage with the biophysical and social components in SEA and EIA
3. The need for legal, policy and methodological support for improving the coverage of cultural heritage in SEA and EIA at international and national levels

(b) One or more emerging trends

1. The concern for both tangible (i.e., material culture) and intangible (i.e., customs, and cultural expression) in assessing cultural heritage within SEA and EIA
2. The attention to cultural landscapes and cityscapes as defined areas for assessment
3. The increasing concern for stakeholder identification and negotiated solutions, especially including local populations and indigenous peoples
4. The growing recognition of, and interest in, the cultural heritage component of SEA and EIA among international, regional, and national cultural, environmental and development institutions, and professional organizations

(c) Issues relating to impact assessment effectiveness:

(i) dimensions of IA effectiveness (i.e. what are the characteristics of effective IA?)

Effective IA includes:

1. due attention to all three recognized components: biophysical, social and cultural heritage in an integrated analysis;
2. consultation with stakeholders, including affected populations and cultural heritage authorities and experts
3. recognition of the social and economic value of cultural assets in the decision making process

(ii) challenges/barriers to IA effectiveness

1. Lack of awareness among cultural heritage authorities and practitioners regarding SEA, EIA, EMPs, and the development process in general
2. Lack of awareness among EIA authorities, consultants and reviewers, of cultural heritage, as well as of the national legislative and administrative provisions for its protection, and the availability of professional expertise
3. Need to improve the quality of cultural heritage identification, assessment and management in most countries of the world
4. Specialization and separation in the cultural heritage field, including a dichotomy between tangible and intangible culture

(iii) how these barriers might be overcome

1. Dissemination of information about SEA, EIA EMPs and the development process, among cultural heritage authorities, organizations and practitioners, including targeted training at the national level
2. Dissemination of information about cultural heritage, cultural landscapes and cityscapes, as well as national laws and management structures for culture, to EIA authorities, consultants and reviewers, and to development proponents
3. Creation by IAIA, and dissemination, of Best Practice Principles for the cultural heritage component of SEA and EIA
4. Training, in various formats, for implementing the cultural heritage component within SEA and EIA

(d) Comments on the Art and Science of Impact Assessment (i.e. the relative importance and interplay between science and values/politics/subjectivity in impact assessment)

Given the best possible information, synthetic analysis, and consultation of all relevant stakeholders, it should be possible to achieve negotiated settlements in situations where values and objectives are in conflict. The importance of cultural values and assets is often overlooked, and this may have a negative effect on development projects in both the short and long run.

The SEA and EIA processes are, at best, scientific, information-based and research- oriented. The reports are not always as cogent and well-organized as necessary for valid public consultation or for guidance in decision making. Moreover, political and economic pressures and timetables often prevail due to their relative power.