De-risking infrastructure projects: prioritising cross-sectoral coordination and early mitigation planning

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Complex impacts reach far beyond spatial limits and influence of project.
No single actor can manage all biodiversity and social impacts.
Recommendations for improved mitigation

Impacts

Cumulative

Indirect

Direct

Increasing complexity

Mitigation implementation

Influence

Pre-EIA impact scoping

Strategic road planning

Early expert consultation

Better cross-sectoral govt agency coordination

More use of SEA

Early spatial planning

Increasing mitigation coordination required

Better FPIC with communities

Recommendations for improved mitigation:

- Better cross-sectoral govt agency coordination
- More use of SEA
- Better cross-sectoral govt agency coordination
- Early spatial planning
- Increasing mitigation coordination required
- Better FPIC with communities

Private sector

Government

Communities & civil society
Biodiversity risk case study: SOCO International in Virunga

Annual Report 2013:
‘...we expect to commence acquiring seismic data on Lake Edward and be completed in Q2 2014.’

Annual Report 2014:
‘...all costs incurred on Block V to date and any further costs anticipated in 2015 have been written off as exploration expense in 2014.’

Planning would have identified high risks:
Virunga NP
- World Heritage site
- Oldest NP in Africa
- Most biodiverse region in Africa

2013 costs incurred: $92m
2014 written off: $73.6m
Someone didn’t assess risks properly
Strategic planning reduces costs and impacts

Strategic planning case study: Roads and biodiversity in South Australia

(a) Independent planning
Cost $36.5bn, $145m agriculture impact, 4.8 biodiversity impact index

(b) Restricted sharing planning
Cost $33.7bn, $140m agriculture impact, 4.2 biodiversity impact index

(c) Shared planning
Cost $13bn, $33m agriculture impact, 1.1 biodiversity impact index

Runge et al. 2017 in press
Strategic partners and lenders can build cross-sectoral planning partnerships

Planning case study:
Cross sector partners and roads in Uganda
Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA)
- Cross-sector teams involved in planning
- Social and biodiversity risks inform planning before design phase

Norwegian Oil for Development program
- Strategic Environmental Assessment to improve value and reduce impacts

Wildlife Conservation Society
- Key Biodiversity Area mapping to inform planning with partners
Pragmatic priorities for de-risking projects

For government, industry, development partners:

1. *Scope risks early* to reduce risk that project design must be changed.
2. *Develop spatial planning early* to identify priorities
3. *Different types of actors* should be involved in planning
4. *Consult a cross-sector panel* as no single actor has expert understanding
5. *Use ESIA screening criteria* to raise bar on quality
Use of ESIA screening tool identifies risk during project design

**Example screening criteria**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Component</strong></th>
<th><strong>Category</strong></th>
<th><strong>Indicators</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Input (technical expertise)</td>
<td>Consultant quality, field effort</td>
<td>Number of peer reviewed papers, time in field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output (biodiversity)</td>
<td>IUCN Red List Species</td>
<td>Number, % of population, habitat map</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Establish norms in policy to reduce risk and improve outcomes

Policy priorities

1. **Prioritise SEA, including No Net Loss objectives for biodiversity and mitigation hierarchy** for public and private sector projects to create level playing field and reduce uncertainty

2. **Establish national regulations aligned with existing best practice** (e.g. IFC PS6, World Bank ESS etc.) to facilitate investment

3. **Build capacity** needed in government agencies, ESIA consultancies, and among stakeholders to improve compliance (e.g. increased role of development banks)

4. **Establish rules for compensation** and offsets (protection, restoration – opportunity to make conservation economically viable)

5. **Build best practice into regional agreements** to help address transboundary project impacts