

Professional and Ethical dilemmas of Impact Assessment Practitioners and the IAIA code of ethics



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Introduction



- The word "ethics" means a system or code of morals of a particular profession. The word "moral" means to be capable of making the distinction between right and wrong.
- Code of ethics means being able to make the distinction between right and wrong on how one conducts the practice of impact assessment.

Measure of ethical conduct

- Is the continuity between what the practitioner is supposed to do and what is actually done. The more what one is supposed to do and what one does coincide, the more ethical is the practice.
- The interface where sorting out what one can do and what one should do that ethics exceed practice and we encounter ethical dilemmas.



IAIA



- IAIA is an organization with a voluntary membership of professionals with diverse interests and organizations, all of whom are concerned with environmental stewardship and sustainability.
- Common goal is to protect the earth (its environments and peoples).
- IAIA is the leading global network on best practice in the use of impact assessment for informed decision making regarding policies, programs, plans and projects.

IAIA Code of Ethics(1)



- 1.** To conduct my professional activities with integrity, honesty, and free from any misrepresentation or deliberate bias.
- 2.** To conduct my professional activities only in subject areas in which I have competence through education, training, or experience. I will engage, or participate with other professionals in subject areas where I am less competent.
- 3.** To take care that my professional activities promote sustainable and equitable actions as well as a holistic approach to impact assessment.
- 4.** To check that all policies, plans, activities, or projects with which I am involved are consistent with all applicable laws, regulations, policies and guidelines.
- 5.** To refuse to provide professional services whenever I am required to bias the analysis or omit or distort facts in order to arrive at a predetermined finding or result.

IAIA Code of Ethics(2)



6. To disclose to employers and clients and in all written reports, any personal or financial interest that could reasonably raise concerns as to a possible conflict of interest between your private and your professional interests.
7. To strive to continually improve my professional knowledge and skills and to stay current with new developments in impact assessment and my associated fields of competence.
8. To acknowledge the sources I have used in my analysis and the preparation of reports.
9. To accept that my name will be removed from the list of self-ascribed professional members of IAIA should I be found to be in breach of this code by a disciplinary task-group constituted by the IAIA Board of Directors to consider any complaint lodged against my professional conduct.

Why do people act in unethical ways?

- **Self deception**- people have different personalities when working and when not working(everyone is doing it)
- **Pressure** - Pressure to succeed, meet deadlines and expectations, from co-workers, bosses, customers,
- **Misguided loyalty** - it was done on behalf of someone (employer)
- **Self interest** – done for personal gain, greed
- **Self protection** - lying to fix a problem or stop a problem from occurring
- **Self righteous** –one’s view is right and no other view matters

Ethical Dilemmas in Impact Assessment (1)

Impact assessment professionals are faced with an ethical dilemma when:

- The terms of reference for the assessment unreasonably constrain the study.
- Pressure is exerted to limit the scope of the assessment or to influence the results.
- Clients, authorities, or affected parties refuse to engage with a study.
- Budgetary limitations affect the ability to conduct an adequate analysis or adequately engage all appropriate stakeholders.
- The time allocated for the assessment is inadequate for a proper study.
- There is a request not to undertake certain specific specialist studies.

Ethical Dilemmas in Impact Assessment (2)

- It is suggested that they emphasize or exaggerate, omit, or not disclose certain information.
- Requests are made to modify draft reports which tend to present a desired interpretation against the assessor's view.
- They become aware of inaccurate reporting by clients, sub-consultants, government agencies, NGOs, donors, or the public.
- All or part of their remuneration is conditional on project approval.
- There is a request to issue either a favorable or critical review of a completed assessment.
- They are asked to assess a project in which they have a financial or personal interest or that will affect them directly.

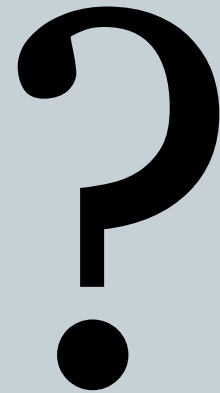
Managing Dilemmas



- 1. Identify the Problem** - Gather as much information as you can and determine nature of the problem: Is it an ethical, legal or professional problem? Is the issue related to me, client, others, institution or agency.
- 2. Consult with experienced professional colleagues and/or supervisors**
- 3. Apply the Code of Ethics** -After you have clarified the problem, refer to the Code of Ethics to see if the issue is addressed there.
- 4. Do not be tempted to accept a compromise that remains in conflict with your code of professional conduct** - Remember a reputation for integrity and for making accurate honest assessments takes time to build but can be quickly lost.
- 5. Determine the hierarchy of principle**-Decide which principles apply to the specific situation, and which principle takes priority
- 6. Decide and evaluate the action** - Decide on a course of action and evaluate outcome.

Questions to ask

- Is it the right thing to do
- Will it stand the test of time
- If something terrible happens could I defend my actions
- Is it balanced or fair
- How will it make me feel about myself
- Does it lead to greater good for greater number of people
- Will I do this in front of my family



That sound like an ethical dilemma Doc?
But relax, it is a problem if you have a conscience

Don't worry...
We will not tell a soul

That's just it!
I think I do!!



CASE STUDY ONE



1. To refuse to provide professional services whenever the practitioner is required to bias the analysis or omit or distort facts in order to arrive at a predetermined finding or result.
In this 'hard times' a practitioner is expected to compromise and if not, the practitioner is forced out of the team and the client then engaged another who is willing to do their bid. Or Next time you are not called. (5)

Possible Options

- Seek independent verification of figures where there is the potential for distortion;
- Advise the client on the risks/implications of deliberate distorting of findings and the possibility project failure
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CASE STUDY TWO



2. As a newly qualified environmental professional, the code of professional ethics requires that you only undertake work for which you are competent through education, training or experience to undertake. Since you are just starting out on your career how do you gain experience other than by taking on jobs of a type that you have not done before? (2)

Possible Options

- Work with another more experienced professional
- Hire someone as a sub-contractor to supplement specific skills
- Engage peer reviewer
- Solicit support from the local professional association/from IAIA network.

CASE STUDY THREE



3. As an environmental practitioner and a member of EIA team, there is always conflict between other professionals, For example, when disclosure of unfavorable facts is not in the client's interests, it is difficult to make this demand on others. Other professionals will say they are bound by their professional codes to serve their client's interests.

Possible Options

- It is Important to distinguish which stage in the process of providing professional advice to the client
- Show the other professionals a copy of the IAIA Code of Professional Conduct and point out to them how their request is at odds with the ethical code of your profession.

THANK
YOU

