

Planning for life-of-mine land requirements

Challenges

- Attempts to minimise resettlement by initially acquiring a limited area where further land access would be necessary later on, can make future expansion difficult and expensive as rural areas often become urbanised with the development of the mine.

Lessons and recommendations

- Satellite/aerial imagery should be used to quantify impacts at an early stage to inform project planners. It can also be used during the declaration of a cut-off date to inform the community of what assets were recorded in order to minimise speculation.
- Project planners should be tasked with looking at the life-of-mine scenarios for the project and engage with the social experts to identify where the influx of economic migrants and speculators will likely occur. The company should then seek to acquire the maximum area possible, balancing this with the feasibility of the project and impacts on local communities and the environment.
- Continuously monitor the land requirements of the project, consulting with the environmental and social monitoring teams to ensure that any further expansion is planned in advance and all efforts made to minimise impacts.

The first step in the assessment process should be the establishment of a team comprising social, environmental and project planning specialists

Planning of baseline data collection

Challenges

- Changes in the project footprint and delays in implementation can lead to gaps in surveys and poor baseline data.
- The use of multiple consultants for data collection and a lack of integration between teams can also lead to poor baseline data.
- Insufficient training of survey teams can result in a failure to gather sufficient baseline information during initial surveys, leading to multiple surveys, survey fatigue and inaccurate data.
- Commencing baseline data collection without a legally enforceable cut-off date can lead to re-surveys with opportunities for speculative activities.
- Poor management of survey data, including the use of an inadequate information management system, can lead to loss of data, speculative cropping and building, legal challenges and opportunities for fraud.

Lessons and recommendations

- Social impact assessment and resettlement experts should plan the collection of baseline data as one co-ordinated activity. This will avoid duplication and enable data to be collected to meet all project outcome and impact measurement requirements, including future monitoring.
- A participatory approach to surveys should be used by engaging the local authorities and community to participate in the process, ensuring that necessary information is explained to households and witnessed by a community representative.
- Where speculative activity is a risk, a rapid asset survey should be conducted immediately after the declaration of a cut-off date to quickly record all assets belonging to households and which are at risk as a result of the project. Communities should also be informed that any further development will not be eligible for compensation and resettlement.